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THE

WORKS

OF

NATHANIEL LARDNER, D.D.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

SERMONS.

COUNSELS OF PRUDENCE FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

A Discourse on

Matthew x. 16. *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves* - - - - - - - - p. 3

A CAUTION AGAINST CONFORMITY TO THIS WORLD.

Two Discourses on

Rom. xii. 2. *And be not conformed to this world* - - - - - p. 14—25

A SERMON OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE REV. WILLIAM HARRIS, D.D.

2 Thess. i. 10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe* - - - - - - - - - p. 25

THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE AN ARGUMENT FOR THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Three Discourses on

Rom. xi. 11. *I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy* - - - p. 34—50

A SERMON OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE REV JEREMIAH HUNT, D.D.

John. xiv. 2. *In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you* - p. 51

SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

I.—THE DUTY OF CONSIDERATION.

Psalm cxix. 59. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies* - - p. 63

II.—THE UNREASONABLENESS OF DELAYS IN THINGS OF RELIGION.

Psalm cxix. 60. *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments* - - - p. 68

III. IV. V.—THE SEVERAL BRANCHES, AND THE NATURE, EXCELLENCE, AND IMPORTANCE OF MORAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Micah vi. 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God* - - - - p. 75—89

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SERMONS—*continued.*

VI.—WISDOM ATTAINABLE BY THOSE WHO SEEK IT.

Prov. viii. 17. *I love them that love me; and those that seek me early, shall find me* - - p. 89

VII.—LITTLE CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

Matth. xix. 13, 14, 15. *Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them* - - p. 95

VIII.—THE HAPPINESS OF HAVING RELIGIOUS PARENTS, AND OTHER PIOUS RELATIVES.

2 Tim. i. v. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Unice: and I am persuaded that in thee also* - - - p. 102

IX.—THE VIRTUE AND BENEFIT OF EARLY PIETY.

1 Kings xviii. 12. *But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth* - - - p. 106

X.—A FUTURE STATE PROVEABLE BY REASON.

Psalm lxxxiv. 11. *For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly* - - - - p. 111

XI. XII.—THE GOSPEL THE TRUE WAY OF SALVATION.

Acts xvi. 31. *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house* - - - - - - p. 118—126

XIII.—THE GOOD EXERCISE OF FAITH.

1 Tim. vi. 12. *Fight the good fight of faith* - - - - - - p. 126

XIV.—THE POWER AND EFFICACY OF CHRIST'S DOCTRINE.

John xv. 5. *For without me ye can do nothing* - - - - - - p. 131

XV.—A RECOMMENDATION OF THINGS VIRTUOUS, LOVELY, AND OF GOOD REPORT.

Philip. iv. 8. *Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things* - - - p. 137

XVI.—THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR WORDS.

Matt. xii. 36, 37. *But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned* - - - - - - - - - - p. 142

XVII.—THE DIFFICULTY OF GOVERNING THE TONGUE.

James iii. 2. *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body,* p. 147

XVIII.—THE BENEFIT OF FEARING ALWAYS.

Prov. xxviii. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief* - - - - - - p. 152

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SERMONS—*continued.*

XIX.—OUR SAVIOUR'S THIRST UPON THE CROSS CONSIDERED AND IMPROVED.

John xix. 28, 29. *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth* - - - - - p. 157

XX.—THE GREATNESS OF JESUS IN HIS LAST SUFFERINGS.

John xix. 30. *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost* - - - - - - - - p. 161—175

XXI.—DIVINE TESTIMONIALS GIVEN TO JESUS DURING HIS LAST SUFFERINGS.

Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. *And the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints, which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many* - - p. 175

XXII.—THE ROMAN SOLDIERS AND THE JEWISH RULERS.

Matt. xxviii. 12, 13. *And when they were assembled, with the Elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money to the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept* p. 180

XXIII.—THE APOSTLE THOMAS.

John xx. 29. *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed* - - - - - - p. 187

XXIV.—JESUS THE SON OF MAN.

Luke xvii. 22. *And he said unto the disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it* - - - - - - p. 192

XXV.—JESUS THE SON OF GOD.

John xx. 17. *Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God* - - - - - - - - p. 197

XXVI.—CHRIST'S POVERTY OUR RICHES.

2 Cor. viii. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich* - - - - p. 202

XXVII.—CHRIST'S FAREWELL WISH OF PEACE TO HIS DISCIPLES.

John xiv. 27. *Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you,* p. 207

XXVIII.—THE APOSTOLICAL BENEDICTION.

2 Cor. xiii. 14. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen* - - - - - - - p. 212

XXIX.—OF PRAYING IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

John xvi. 24. *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full* - - - - - - - - - p. 218

XXX.—THE WOMAN THAT ANOINTED JESUS WITH PRECIOUS OINTMENT.

Matt. xxvi. 13. *Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her* - - - - p. 229

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SERMONS.—*Continued.*

XXXI.—THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TAKEN BY FORCE.

Matt. xi. 12. *From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force* - - - - - - - - - - p. 236

XXXII.—VIRTUE RECOMMENDED UNDER THE SIMILITUDE OF WHITE RAIMENT.

Rev. iii. 18. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear* - - p. 242

XXXIII.—THE GREAT MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

1 Tim. iii. 16. *And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory* - - - - - - - - - - p. 248

POSTHUMOUS SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

I.—ON THE RIGHT IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

Eph. v. 16. *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil* - - - - - p. 253

II.—JESUS MADE A CURSE FOR US.

Gal. iii. 13, 14. *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith* - - p. 260

III.—THE PROMISE ANNEXED TO GODLINESS.

1 Tim. iv. 8. *For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come* - - - - - p. 267

IV.—ON THE SAME SUBJECT AND TEXT. - - - p. 271

V.—INTERNAL MARKS OF CREDIBILITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

2 Peter i. 15, 16. *Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, bat were eye-witnesses of his majesty* - - p. 276

VI.—ON THE SAME SUBJECT AND TEXT - - - p. 285

VII.—THE MODERATION OF CHRISTIANS TO BE KNOWN TO ALL MEN.

Phil. iv. 5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men* - - - - - p. 297

VIII.—ON KEEPING THE HEART.

Prov. iv. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life* - - - p. 302

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TWO SCHEMES OF A TRINITY CONSIDERED, AND THE DIVINE UNITY ASSERTED.

FOUR DISCOURSES UPON PHILIP. II. 5—11.

Advertisement - - - - - - - - p. 308
Discourse I. *The Scheme of a Trinity commonly received* - - - - - p. 309
II. *The Arian Scheme* - - - - - - - - p. 312
III. *The Nazarean Doctrine* - - - - - - - - p. 317
IV. *The Text explained according to the Nazarean doctrine, with remarks and observations* p. 326

TRACTS.

A Vindication of Three of our Blessed Saviour's Miracles, in answer to the Objections of Mr. Woolston, p. 332

A Letter written in the Year 1730, concerning the Question, whether the Logos supplied the place of a Human Soul in the Person of Jesus Christ - - - - - p. 371
The First Postscript, containing an explication of those words, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God, as used in the Scriptures - - - - - p. 395
The Second Postscript, containing Remarks upon the Third Part of the late Bishop of Clogher's Vindication of the Histories of the Old and New Testament - - - - p. 423

A DISSERTATION UPON THE TWO NEW EPISTLES ASCRIBED TO CLEMENT OF ROME.

Sect. 1. Extracts out of these Epistles, for shewing the author's testimony to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament - - - - - - - p. 432
2. External Evidence against the Genuineness of these Epistles - - - p. 433
3. Internal Evidence to the same purpose, and their Time - - - p. 439
4. The author Anonymous - - - - - - p. 444
5. The importance and use of these Epistles - - - - - p. 445
6. Conclusion - - - - - - - - ib.

An Essay on the Mosaic Account of the Creation and Fall of Man - - - p. 446

A Letter to Jonas Hanway, Esq. in which some reasons are assigned against the name, Magdalen Houses - - - - - - - - - p. 459

A Letter to the Authors of the Library, &c. containing Observations on 2 Cor. v. 14 - - p. 465

Remarks on 1 Cor. xv. 32 - - - - - - - p. 466

An Inquiry into the Truth of the History of the Seven Brothers said to have suffered Martyrdom in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, 2 Macc. vii. - - - - - p. 467

A Letter to the Author of Remarks upon the Inquiry into the Truth of the History of the Seven Brothers in the Maccabees - - - - - - - p. 470

A Letter upon the Personality of the Spirit - - - - - - - p. 473

REMARKS UPON THE LATE DR. WARD'S DISSERTATIONS UPON SEVERAL PASSAGES OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

Introduction - - - - - - - - p. 475
Chap. I. The case of the Dæmoniac who resided among the tombs on the coast of Gadara. *Dissert.* xxi. - - - - - - - ib.
II. Who those Greeks were who desired to see Jesus; and whether they were admitted? John xii. 20, 21. *Dissert.* xxviii. - - - - - - p. 480
III. How to reconcile St. John's account concerning the time of our Saviour's Crucifixion with that of the other Evangelists. *Dissert.* xxxii. - - - - p. 482

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Chap. IV. The manner of embalming dead bodies among the Jews, and particularly that of our Saviour *Dissert.* xxxv. - - - - - - - p. 485
V. Whom are we to understand by the Grecians and Hebrews, mentioned Acts vi. 1. *Dissert.* xxxvii. - - - - - - - p. 487
VI. The term Holy Ghost, in the New Testament, denotes both a person and a power. *Dissert.* xxxviii. - - - - - - - p. 493
VII. To whom the apostolic decree, Acts xv. was directed; and whether it was perpetual. *Dissert.* xlii. - - - - - - - p. 494
Sect. 1. An introduction - - - - - ib.
2. The Noachic precepts, with observations upon them - - - - - ib.
3. To whom the apostolic decree was directed, and that there was but one sort of Jewish proselytes - - - - - - - - p. 498
4. General observations, shewing the occasion and design of the apostolic decree - p. 504
5. The several articles of the decree explained - - - - - p. 506
6. Observations in the manner of corollary. Where is shewn the fault of St Peter, and St. Paul vindicated - - - - - - - - p. 509
Chap. VIII. Whether St. Paul did really blame St. Peter for his conduct, mentioned Gal. ii. *Dissert.* l. p. 519
IX. What is the meaning of St. Paul's expression, *You see how large a letter I have written unto you with my own hand.* Gal. vi. 11. *Dissert.* li. - - - - p. 521

Observations upon Dr. Macknight's Harmony of the Four Gospels, as far as relates to the History of our Saviour's Resurrection; in a Letter to the Author - - - - - p. 522

INDEXES.

I. Greek Words Explained - - - - - - - p. 545
II. Various Readings of Texts in the New Testament - - - - ib.
III. Texts of Scripture Explained - - - - - - p. 546
Texts of Sermons in the Fifth Volume - - - - - p. 549
IV. Authors, Sects, and Writings, whose History is written, and from which Extracts are made ib.
V. An Alphabetical Table of Principal Matters - - - - - p. 554

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SERMONS.

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COUNSELS OF PRUDENCE FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

WISDOM OF THE SERPENT AND THE INNOCENCE OF THE DOVE:

IN WHICH ARE RECOMMENDED GENERAL RULES OF PRUDENCE; WITH PARTICULAR DIRECTIONS RELATING TO BUSINESS, CONVERSATION, FRIENDSHIP, AND USEFULNESS.

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. Matt. x. 16.

THIS advice is found among those directions which our blessed Lord gave his disciples when he sent them from him upon a commission in his life-time here on earth. "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying: Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." Matt. x. 5—8.

It is reasonable to conclude, that the disciples received this commission with much pleasure and satisfaction, accounting it a great honour done them, and conceiving at the same time fond expectations of honour and acceptance wherever they came. They were to carry with them very joyful and desirable tidings, that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand:" they were empowered to confer very great benefits, and were required to do all freely, without receiving any gratuity. The limitation in their commission could not but be a high recommendation of it: the good news was to be published to Jews, and them only, not to Gentiles, nor to Samaritans.

But our Lord thought not fit to dismiss them without some particular counsels and directions, which would be of use to them now, but especially hereafter; when their commission should receive an enlargement, both with regard to the subject matter of their message, and the persons to whom they were to carry it. And he judged it needful to give them some hints of a different reception from what they thought of, and some cautions to be upon their guard: that they might not afford any just ground for misconstructions or injurious reflections, nor do any thing that should tend to draw upon themselves a disagreeable treatment. He therefore tells them: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." 'You mean well 'yourselves, and you think well of others. But I must forewarn you, that many, to whom 'you are going, have selfish and malicious dispositions, and are subtle and artful. For which 'reason you are to be cautious and prudent: "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as 'doves." Maintaining your present innocence and integrity, decline dangers as much as possible, 'and take care not to give any ground for reflection upon your conduct.'

This advice then of our Saviour to his disciples will give me just occasion to recommend some rules and directions of prudent conduct and behaviour to those who are entering upon the stage of action in the world. In doing which I shall take this method.

I. I shall represent the nature of prudence.

II. I shall show the necessity, grounds and reasons of prudence.

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III. I intend to lay down some rules and directions concerning a prudent conduct, with regard both to our words and actions.

I. I shall represent the nature of prudence. In general, it is a discerning and employing the most proper means of obtaining those ends which we propose to ourselves. He who aims at his own advancement is prudent, if he contrive a good scheme for that purpose, and then put in practice the several parts of it with diligence and discretion. If the end aimed at be the good and welfare of others, in any particular respect; then prudence lies in taking those methods which are most likely to promote the advantage of those persons, and in doing that in the way least prejudicial to ourselves, and most consistent with our own safety.

It is an important branch of prudence to avoid faults. One false step sometimes ruins, or however greatly embarrasses and retards a good design. Therefore prudent conduct depends more on great caution and circumspection than great abilities. A bright genius is necessary for producing a fine composition. Courage and presence of mind are needful for a hazardous undertaking: but circumspection alone, such caution as secures against errors and faults, makes up a great part of prudent conduct, by preventing many evils and inconveniences.

Prudence likewise supposeth the maintaining of innocence and integrity. We may not neglect our duty to avoid danger. The principal wisdom is to approve ourselves to God, and it is better to suffer any temporal evil, than incur the Divine displeasure. These disciples of Christ were to go out and preach, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." That was the work assigned them by their Lord and Master, which therefore it was their duty to perform, and they could by no means decline. But they might do it in the way which would least expose them to inconveniences, and was most likely to secure acceptance to their message and themselves. This is prudence.

We are not out of a pretence of discretion to desert the cause of truth. But we are to espouse it with safety if we can; that is, maintain it in the way least offensive to others, and least dangerous to ourselves.

Nor have we a right from any rules of prudence to use unlawful methods to obtain our end. Our end is supposed to be good, and the means must be so likewise. Thus far of the nature of prudence.

II. I would now shew the necessity, grounds, and reasons of prudence. These are chiefly the wickedness and the weakness of men. The former is the reason which our Lord refers to. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents." It is upon this ground likewise, that St. Paul recommends the practice of prudent caution: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil," Eph. v. 15, 16. Some men are malicious and designing, enemies to truth and virtue, and to all that are hearty friends of either. Good men therefore are obliged to be upon their guard, and make use of some methods of defence and security. Others are weak and simple, and therefore liable to be misled and imposed upon by the insinuations of the subtle and malicious.

Nay, if there were no bad men, yet there would be need of a prudent behaviour, because some who have not much reflection or experience are apt to put wrong constructions upon harmless actions.

This leads us somewhat farther into the nature of prudence, and to observe a particular, which could not be so well taken notice of, before we had observed this ground and reason of it. For a great part of prudence lies in denying ourselves, so as to keep some way within the limits of virtue. A good man, if all about him were wise and good, might be secure in his innocence alone. It might then be sufficient to mean well, and to pursue directly the good ends he has in view, without doing any harm in the prosecution of them. But now, on account of the weakness of some, he must not only be innocent, but he must also obviate misconstructions and misrepresentations.

We may perceive this in an instance or two. Our Saviour directs his disciples at the eleventh verse of this chapter: "Into whatsoever city or town ye enter, inquire who is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence." This is more particularly expressed in another Gospel: "In the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: go not from house to house," Luke x. 7. They had not then in the eastern countries houses of public entertainment. And it was usual for men of good dispositions, such as our Lord terms worthy, to enter-

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tain strangers. The disciples were sent two and two. They were not to make a long abode in any place, and would not be thought burdensome by any that were worthy or hospitable men. But our Lord charges them "not to go from house to house," or remove from the place they had first resorted to. This perhaps might be sometimes done very reasonably. But our Lord does now in a manner absolutely restrain his disciples from acting thus, whatever some others might do: that they might not give any the least ground of suspicion, or insinuation, that they were curious about their entertainment.

It was upon this principle that the apostle Paul went yet farther, and in some places, particularly in Greece, waved his right to a subsistence from those he taught, as he observes to the Corinthians: "If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power, but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ," 1 Cor. ix. 12. Again, ver. 19. "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant to all, that I might gain the more." This rule he observed also at Thessalonica: "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God," 1 Thess. ii. 9.

I have now given you a view of the nature of prudence, and the reasons of it.

III. In the next place I am to lay down some rules and directions concerning a prudent conduct with regard to our words and actions.

This is indeed a work of some niceness and delicacy, and is most properly reserved for men of distinguished characters. There is likewise oftentimes a backwardness in men to pay any deference to directions of this kind, except they are delivered by men of large experience, and of great renown for wisdom. For this reason, as it seems, Solomon in his book of Proverbs, containing excellent rules of virtue and prudence, thought fit to introduce Wisdom herself proclaiming her kind intentions to mankind, and delivering many of those directions, that men might be the better induced to hearken to them. And when he was about to publish some remarks upon the world, and the affairs of men in it, he aggrandises his own character, and sets it off to the best advantage; giving himself the title of "the Preacher," or Collector. Ecc. i. 1. One who had been long and carefully employed in laying up a store of just and useful observations; and who had good opportunities for that purpose, as he was "King in Jerusalem:" affirming likewise, that he had given his heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven;" that he "had seen all the works that are done under the sun," and that his "heart had great experience in wisdom and knowledge," Ecc. i. 1—16.

As we have before us for our guidance the observations of those who have been eminent for wisdom, and whose character is well established in the world; it may be presumed, that all these high qualifications are not now requisite for a performance of this nature. And I would hope, that they, for whom the following directions are chiefly intended, are already so wise, or so well disposed at least, as to be willing to hearken to good counsel from any one who means them well. It will be my care to deliver such rules of prudence as have been approved and recommended by those who have had a knowledge of the world, and are esteemed good judges of mankind. And I shall generally support the rules laid down by reasons, which if they do not convince, the counsel itself may be the less regarded.

Rules of this sort are very numerous, and have been often given, as many are in the book of Proverbs, without connection or dependence on each other. I shall propose those I mention in the following method: First, I shall observe some general rules of prudence; and then some particular directions relating to business, civil conversation in the world, more intimate friendship, and private relations; lastly, usefulness to others.

1. I shall mention some general rules of prudence. The preservation of our integrity in acting strictly according to the rules of religion and virtue will not be allowed a place among these rules. However, (as has been already shewn,) it ought to be supposed. Our blessed Lord does not omit the innocence of the dove, when he recommends the wisdom of the serpent. I must therefore again desire it may be observed, that nothing I am about to say is to be understood as inconsistent with integrity; which, though not properly a rule of prudence, is oftentimes of advantage, and is both a mean of security, and adds weight and influence to a man's character. "He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely, but he that perverteth his way shall be known," Prov. x. 9. Again: "In the way of righteousness there is life, and in the path-

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way thereof there is no death," ch. xii. 28. Moreover; "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," ch. iv. 18. Though virtuous and upright men should for a while lie in obscurity, they may shine hereafter with a greater lustre. And, which is above all external considerations and advantages of this present world, virtue is of the highest importance to the inward peace of the mind, and our everlasting happiness in the world to come. Supposing then a strict regard to uprightness of heart, and innocence of behaviour;

1.) The first rule of prudence I lay down is this, that we should endeavour to know ourselves. He that knows not himself may undertake designs he is not fit for, and can never accomplish; in which he must therefore necessarily meet with disappointment. Nor can any man have comfort and satisfaction in an employment that is unsuitable to his temper.

Besides a knowledge of our own genius, temper and inclination; it is needful, that we should be also possessed of a just idea of our outward circumstances and condition, and the relation we bear to persons about us. It is one branch of prudence for a man to behave agreeably to his own particular character. If he mistake that, he will be guilty of many improprieties. But a just discernment of our own circumstances, and of our relation to other men, will make way for an agreeable and acceptable deportment.

The knowledge of yourselves will prevent conceit on the one hand, and meanness of spirit and conduct on the other. You will readily act with that modest assurance, which becomes your birth, estate, age, station, abilities, skill and other advantages; without departing from your just right, or assuming more than ought to be reasonably allowed you.

2.) Endeavour to know other men. It is a point of charity to hope the best of every man, and of prudence to fear the worst. Not that these are inconsistent. It would be to misrepresent a Christian virtue extremely, to suppose, that it obliged us to trust men without any knowledge of them. We are to hope and suppose of every man, that he is good and honest, till we have some proof to the contrary. This is the judgment of charity. But we are not bound to employ men, or confide in them, till we have some positive evidences of their honesty and capacity for the trust we would commit to them, or the work in which we would employ them.

Some men are unreasonably suspicious and jealous. Because they are bad themselves, or because they have had dealings with some that are so, they have formed a notion that all men are false and unfaithful. This is a wicked extreme. They who are in it are fitly punished for so disadvantageous and unjust an opinion of their fellow-creatures. Such must needs become contemptible themselves. They may be safe, but they can never make any figure in society; it being, I suppose, impossible for one man alone to carry on any important design, or do any thing considerable in any business or profession. There is therefore a necessity of mutual confidence among men.

On the other hand, some good men are apt to think, that all other men are so. This is oftentimes the sentiment likewise of the young and unexperienced. And indeed it must be some uneasiness to those who are innocent and undesigning themselves, to suspect other men, or to withhold trust and confidence from them. But however kind and favourable their apprehensions and inclinations may be, it would certainly be imprudent to trust to all appearances, and give credit to every pretence. The counsel in the text is given by our Lord to his honest well-meaning disciples, because he knew there were men in the world of bad dispositions, more than these unexperienced disciples were aware of: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents." Solomon has an observation to this purpose: "The simple believeth every word, but the prudent looketh well to his goings," Prov. xiv. 15. The confidence placed in men ought to be proportioned to the evidences of their faithfulness and capacity. If any act otherwise, there is danger of shame and disappointment. It must therefore be of great advantage in life to be able to form a true judgment of men.

The knowledge of men, the skill of discerning their talents and dispositions, will be of use not only in business, but also in civil conversation, in the choice of friendships and relations, in designs of usefulness, and indeed in every occasion and occurrence of life. You will thereby know, whom to trust with safety, whom to be free and open with in conversation, whose favour it is your interest to seek, on whom you can bestow your favours and services with a likely prospect of doing some good, or with hopes of grateful returns, if ever you should want them.

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3.) Watch, and embrace opportunities. This is a rule which ought to be observed with regard to our words and actions. "There is a season for every thing, and every thing is beautiful in its time," Ecc. iii. 1, 11. "There is a time to speak, and a time to keep silence," says Solomon, ver. 7. Again, "A word spoken in due season, how good is it?" Prov. xv. 23. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," ch. xxv. 11.

In all affairs there are some special opportunities, which it is a point of wisdom to improve. "He that gathers in summer is a wise son. But he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame," Prov. x. 5. Some opportunities, like that here mentioned by Solomon, are obvious to all. And it must be gross stupidity not to know them, and incorrigible sloth to neglect them. But there are some opportunities which will be observed and taken by none but those who are discerning and attentive. Every one can see an opportunity, when it is past: but he only who is wise, sees it beforehand, or perceives and embraces it, when present.

4.) Advise with those who are able to give you good counsel. "Without counsel purposes are disappointed, but in the multitude of counsellors they are established," Prov. xv. 22. At least, in all important and difficult cases call in the aid of some friends. "Every purpose is established by counsel, and with good advice make war," ch. xx. 18. It is great presumption in any man to be self-sufficient, and to suppose, that in all cases he can act well by his own skill alone.

As counsel ought to be asked, so there should be a disposition to hearken to it; or at least to weigh well the reasons that are brought for or against any design. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkens unto counsel is wise," Prov. xii. 15.

But yet there is need of some discretion in the choice of counsellors. They should be usually the aged and experienced; always, if possible, such as are sincere and disinterested. I scarce need therefore to caution you against advising with your rivals and competitors. If you are so happy as to have parents, to whom you can have recourse, you must be in the right to consult with them in affairs of moment. If you have not this advantage, however recollect the advices they have given you. Perhaps they have left with you some counsels of prudence, as well as of virtue. When you are forming designs inconsistent with their counsels, give such designs a second consideration, before you take a final resolution. This may be reckoned a point of wisdom, as well as a piece of respect due to those who heartily wished your welfare.

After them, advise with, and hearken to, those who are most like them in a sincere and unaffected concern for your true interest. But if any whom you consult, always advise according to your own inclinations, you may be assured they are not your friends. It is not your interest they consult, but their own. So likewise, if any, of whom you honestly ask advice, with an intention to be informed and guided by them, are shy and reserved, though at other times, and upon other occasions, they are open enough, you should remember not to go to them again. It is not worth the while to reveal your designs to such. It can be of no advantage, and may be attended with some inconveniences.

5.) Restrain and govern your affections. This is of great importance to the prudent conduct of life. In all debates he who is calm and composed, as all are sensible, has a vast advantage over a heated adversary. But I mean not the restraint of anger only, or resentment upon a provocation; but a steady government of all the passions, and a calm and composed temper of mind in all occurrences. He who is overset by a cross accident, is lost beyond redress, and can never get out of a difficulty, though there still remain several ways of escape and recovery.

Avoid too great eagerness for any earthly thing. Men of violent inclinations are immediately for action. They have no sooner thought of a thing, but they must have it. They are at once passed the state of deliberation within themselves, and of consultation with others. Men who are extremely eager for gain and riches, are not always the most successful. They precipitate all their measures. They can never have an opportunity, because they cannot wait till it offers. Such usually run desperate hazards, and accordingly meet with great losses. Solomon, who has so often spoken of the benefit of diligence, does nevertheless discourage eagerness of spirit and action, as ruinous and destructive. "The thoughts of the diligent," says he, "tend only to plenteousness: but of every one that is hasty, only to want," Prov. xxi. 5.

Hence, the men of hasty spirit often plunge themselves into great difficulties; which no after thought of their own, nor kind assistance of their friends, can extricate them out of. What Solomon says of men subject to intemperate anger is very likely to be the case of all who have

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any other ungoverned passion: "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment: for, if thou deliver him, yet thou must do it again," Prov. xix. 19. If you help them out of one trouble, yet they will soon run themselves into some other. And in another place the same wise man has given a lively image of the defenceless and deplorable condition of those who are under the government of violent passions: "He that has no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls," Prov. xxv. 28.

It seems to be for this reason, that men of lesser abilities do often succeed better in business, and indeed in some important affairs, than the more acute and penetrating. They have slow capacities, but they are abundantly recompensed by the coolness of their passions. They move on with a steady, even pace, without slips or falls; till at length, to the surprise of all who were not very discerning indeed, they distance many who set out with much more life and vigour.

These are general rules of prudence. They need not to be mentioned again. But they ought to be observed upon every particular occasion, and will be of use in all the affairs and actions of life that require prudent conduct and management.

2. I am now to lay down some particular rules of prudence concerning several branches of conduct, and divers circumstances of life. They will concern these four points beforementioned; business, civil conversation, more intimate friendships and relations, and usefulness to others.

1.) Of business. I may not presume to give many directions relating to this matter. But I apprehend it to be a point of great prudence, for a man to endeavour to be fully master of his employment. He who is skilful in his calling, and diligently attends to it, and is punctual to his promises and engagements, can seldom fail of encouragement. These may be generally reckoned surer means of success, than a large acquaintance, address, importunity, or any other such like arts of procuring the dealings of men: though these need not be entirely neglected, and may be of use, if they are not too much depended on. Interest is a prevailing principle, and that will dispose men to be concerned with, and employ those who are skilful, diligent and punctual.

It is also esteemed a point of prudence for men to abide in the employment to which they have been educated, and in which they have once engaged: unless there be some great and particular inconvenience attending it, or some strong and peculiar inducement to another.

But by no means hearken to the speeches of those who would draw you off from all employment. Some there are in the world, men of sprightly and aspiring fancies, (as they would be thought) who would persuade you, that business is below the dignity of rational beings; or, however, of all who would shine and be distinguished. You will be justified by Solomon in throwing contempt on such imaginations: "He that is despised, and has a servant, is better than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread," Prov. xii. 9. Again, ver. 11. "He that tilleth his land, shall have plenty of bread, but he that followeth vain persons shall have poverty enough."

2.) The next thing concerning which I would give some directions is civil conversation. In general, endeavour to act according to your own character, and maintain that suitably to the persons you meet with, of different abilities, principles and circumstances.

He is happy in the art of conversation, who can preserve a mean, without being light, or formal; neither too reserved, nor too open. Reservedness is disagreeable and offensive: too great openness, in mixed company, with which you are not well acquainted, is often attended with dangerous consequences. It may be a good rule for every man, to guard especially against that extreme which he is most liable to fall into; by which he is in the greateat danger of exposing himself, or offending others. Which is the worst extreme, may not be easy to determine. But I think, if we will take the judgment of Solomon, too great openness must be the most inconsistent with prudence. For silence is with him a mark of wisdom, and there is scarce any one thing he has oftener recommended than the government of the tongue; nor any thing he has more plainly and more frequently condemned, than talkativeness. I shall remind you of some of his sayings upon this argument. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin. But he that refraineth his lips is wise," Prov. x. 19. "He that hath knowledge, spareth his words: even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise, and he that shutteth his lips, is esteemed a man of understanding," ch. xvii. 27, 28. "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright. But the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness," ch. xv. 2. "A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man keepeth it in till afterwards," ch. xxix. 11. "Wisdom resteth in the heart

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of him that has understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known," Prov. xiv. 33. "He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his mouth, shall have destruction," ch. xiii. 3. Especially, be cautious of what you say of others; and be not too forward in giving characters, either by way of praise or dispraise.

The only end of conversation is not to entertain, or instruct others. You are likewise to aim at your own improvement, and the increase of your present stock of learning and knowledge. Nor is it necessary, in order to be agreeable, that you should entertain the company with discourse. You may as much oblige some men by patient attention to what they say, as by producing just and new observations of your own. For young persons particularly, silence and modesty must be advantageous qualities in conversation. St. James's precept is general: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." Jam. i. 19: And if attended to, would lessen the multitude of some men's words, very much to their own benefit, and the improvement of society.

Another rule of prudence relating to this matter, which is also a point of duty, is: "If possible, live peaceably with all men," Rom. xii. 18. Do not needlessly offend, or disoblige any. A resolution to please men in all adventures, amidst the present variety of sentiments and affections in the world, would engage us, at seasons, to desert the cause of truth, liberty and virtue. And therefore our Lord has justly pronounced a woe upon those who are universally applauded, saying: "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you," Luke vi. 26. Such a reputation is rarely to be obtained without a base and criminal indifference for some things very valuable and important to the general interest of mankind. However, do not despise any man, though ever so mean. Malice and hatred are active principles. And, as has been often observed, one enemy may do you more mischief, than many friends can do you good. Nor is there any man so mean, or so feeble, but he may some time have an opportunity of doing you much good, or much harm.

You are not to be afraid of men, nor too solicitous to please them, nor to stoop to flattery or meanness to gain their favour. These are methods neither very virtuous, nor very prudent. For they seldom procure lasting esteem or affection. If you gain men's favour by flattery, you can keep it no longer than you are willing to be their slaves, or their tools. But you may endeavour by easy civilities, and real services, to oblige and gain all you can. This we may do, this we ought to do, according to the rules of Christianity, good breeding and prudence.

Choose, as much as may be, the conversation of those who are wiser and more experienced than yourselves. Avoid the company of those who indulge intemperate mirth, and neglect the rules of decency; from whom you can expect no benefit, and from whom you are in danger of receiving a taint to your virtue, or a blot to your reputation. "He that walketh with wise persons," saith Solomon, "shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 20.

3.) In the third place I shall mention some observations concerning more intimate friendships and private relations. It is a rule to choose friends among acquaintance, and not to enter into intimacy with those of whom you have had no trial, because a false friend is the most dangerous enemy. Solomon has a direction relating to this point: "Thine own friend, and thy father's friend forsake not," Prov. xxviii. 10. The meaning is not, that we should not desert such, or refuse to assist them when they are in distress: but it is a rule of prudence, to choose for friends, or to apply to those, when we are in any trouble or difficulty, whose sincerity and faithfulness have been tried and experienced.

In the choice of friends it may be prudent to have some regard to equality of age, as well as circumstances, and to an agreement of sentiments and dispositions.

If you are to avoid the conversation of the openly vicious, (as was before observed) you are to make friendship only with men of known and approved virtue. Let those be your friends whom God himself loves; the meek, the humble, the peaceable who abhor strife and contention. Solomon's caution against familiarity with men of a contrary disposition is delivered with some peculiar concern and earnestness: "Make no friendship," says he, "with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul," Prov. xxii. 24, 25. You may likewise consider, whether they shew a good economy in their own affairs: what has hitherto been their behaviour among their friends and acquaintance: what proofs they have given of fidelity, discretion, candour, generosity. The more good pro-

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perties meet in your friend, the more entire and comfortable will be your friendship, and the more likely is it to be durable. Happy is the man who has a few friends, true, discreet, generous. But to admit into intimacy men destitute of all good qualities, who neither have faithfulness nor generosity to stand by you in distresses and afflictions, nor wisdom to direct you in difficulties, would be only to increase the troubles and vexations of life, without abating any of them, or making provision for a perplexed and difficult circumstance.

Solomon, who was sensible of the blessing of a true friend, and has described the advantages and the offices of friendship, has also strongly represented the disappointment and vexation of misplaced confidence. Concerning the advantages of friendship he speaks in this manner: "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity," Prov. xvii. 17. "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth: for he has not another to help him up." Again, "If two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a three-fold cord is not easily broken," Ecc. iv. 9, 10, 11, 12. But then he has observed likewise by way of caution and admonition: "Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint," Prov. xxv. 12.

When you have adopted any into intimacy and friendship, they are in a great measure upon a level with relations. Though they differ somewhat, I shall speak of them jointly, to avoid prolixity.

There are here two things principally to be aimed at: one is, that friendships and alliances be preserved without open ruptures: the other is, that whilst there remains an outward show of friendship, or alliances subsist, there may be a real harmony, and a mutual exchange of affections and services.

In the first place, it is of great importance, that friendships and alliances, once contracted, should be preserved, without open ruptures. For, though you have right on your side; yet[a] breaches between friends, or relatives, are seldom without scandal to both parties. But if you escape that, you will not avoid all uneasiness in yourselves. A distant strangeness, or open variance, after mutual endearments, will be grievous to men of kind and generous dispositions. The other end is the preservation of real harmony.

In order to secure both these ends several things are of great use. It is an observation of Solomon relating to this point: "A man that has friends must shew himself friendly," Prov. xviii. 24. You must not admit a selfish temper. You are to be concerned for your friend's interest, as well as your own.

As perfection is not to be found on earth, you are to be prepared and disposed to overlook some faults. You are not to know every thing which you see or hear. "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter, separateth very friends," Prov. xvii. 9. "A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame," ch. xii. 16. If any difference happen, drop it again as soon as you recover your temper. "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with," ch. xvii. 14. You are not to break with a friend for a small matter.

The better to secure the lasting love and good-will of your friends, aim not barely at the preservation of a real affection for them, and the performance of real services; but consult likewise the manner of performing benefits. You think this worthy of your regard in order to gain a friendship: why should you not also for preserving, or cherishing it?

Indeed, all good offices should be done in an obliging manner. And friendly actions are to be improved by friendly words. There is a polite piece of advice in the book of Ecclesiasticus: "My son, blemish not thy good deeds; neither use uncomfortable words, when thou givest any thing. Shall not the dew assuage the heat? So is a word better than a gift. Lo, is not a word better than a gift? But both are with a gracious man," Ecc. xviii. 15, 16, 17.

Trespass not too far on the goodness and affection of the kindest and most loving friend or

[a] It will not be amiss to transcribe here a passage of Photius. Some readers will be pleased to see, how this thought is expressed by so fine a writer. Μη ταχυς ησθα ζευγνυειν εις φιλιαν συζευξας δε, παντι τροπω τον δεσμον αλυτον συντηρει, απαν τω πλησιον αγεχων το βαρος, πλην ει μητω ψυχης κινδυνον επαγει· αι γαρ προς τους φιλους διαστασεις την ολην προαιρεσιν εκφαυλιζουσι των ανθρωπων, και ου τον υπαιτιον μονον, αλλα και τον αναιτιον εις την αυτην υποψιαν καταστωσιν. Phot. Ep. 1. p. 27.

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relative by too frequent contradictions, especially in matters of small moment; or by too keen, or too frequent jests, or by any seeming neglect, or a rude familiarity: but whilst you use the openness, freedom and confidence of a friend, oblige yourselves to the same, or very near the same outward forms of civility and respect with which you receive a stranger. This must be of some importance, because few men can persuade themselves, that they are really beloved, when they seem to be despised.

4.) The last thing to be spoken to is usefulness to others. Though I am giving rules and directions chiefly to young people, who are but setting out in the world; yet I think it not proper to omit entirely this matter, there being few good and innocent persons, however young, who have not also some generosity; and they are apt to be forming designs of usefulness to other men, as well as of advancement for themselves.

There are two branches of usefulness; one concerning the interest of civil society, the other the interest of truth and religion; or the temporal, and the spiritual good and welfare of men.

One branch of usefulness is serving the interest of civil society. For this every man may be concerned, having first carefully informed himself about it, that he may make a true judgment wherein it consists. You should manifest a steady regard to the public welfare upon every occasion that requires your assistance: shewing, that you are not to be imposed upon by false pretences, and that your integrity is inviolable; that you will not for a little present profit, nor for all your own personal share in the world, sell, or betray the welfare of the public, and of mankind in general. If you maintain this steadiness in the way suitable to your station, it will procure you weight and influence. I suppose this may be more advisable, than to imitate those, who out of a forward zeal for the public have been so far transported as to leave their proper station, and set upon reforming the world, hoping to root out at once all abuses and corruptions. From some things that have already happened in the world, in almost every age and part of it, one may safely foretell what will be the issue of such an undertaking. You will be baffled, and then despised. Possibly, Solomon has an eye to such attempts as these, when he says: "Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" Ecc. vii. 16.

It is a regular and becoming deportment in a man's own proper station, which is most likely to give him weight and authority. Go on therefore by a just discharge of all the duties of your condition, to lay up a stock of reputation and influence. To do this will be great prudence, and to improve it, as occasions offer, or to hazard and lay it all out for the good of the public, in a case of emergency, will be both prudent and generous.

The other branch of usefulness is promoting the interest of truth and religion. There are three or four rules to be observed here, which may be collected from some directions, and the example of our blessed Lord and his apostles. "Cast not your pearls before swine: if they persecute you in one city, flee into another: instruct men, as they are able to bear it: use mildness of speech, and meekness of behaviour."

These rules partly regard our own safety, and partly the best way of obtaining the end aimed at. For, as every good man ought to have a zeal for the happiness of others, and particularly for promoting truth and virtue; so it is a point of prudence to pursue such good ends in the use of those means, which are most likely to obtain them, and with as little danger or damage to ourselves as may be.

The first is a rule delivered by our Saviour: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you," Matt. vii. 6. There is a rule of like import in the Proverbs: "Speak not in the ear of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of thy words." Prov. xxiii. 9. This too is partly the design of that direction which St. Paul gives to Timothy: describing some men, that they had a "form of godliness, denying the power of it; from such," says he, "turn away," 2 Tim. iii. 5. Leave them, as men whom you have no prospect of doing any good to. Our Lord himself observed this rule: for he rarely addressed himself directly to the pharisees, but rather taught the people: and his disciples afterwards having made a tender of the gospel to the Jews, when they rejected it, went from them to the Gentiles. Acts xiii. 46.

The true character of those men who are not the subjects of instruction is this; they "trust in themselves, that they are righteous, and despise others," Luke xviii. 9. Again: "Their heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at

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any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should be converted and healed," Matt. xiii. 15.

These are not to be instructed. Nor would they admit a direct address and application to be made to them. You may warn others against them, you may weep over them, you may pray for them, but you cannot teach them. It is a dangerous thing to offer them any service to enlighten them. If they are not under some external restraints, they turn again and rend you. If therefore upon trial you meet with men of this character and disposition, you are to retreat as well as you can. The most that can be thought of is to wait for a better opportunity.

However, our blessed Lord gives this charge to his disciples: "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-top," Matt. x. 27. Proclaim the doctrine you have heard from me publicly wherever you go, and do all that lies in your power to recommend it to all men. And it must be owned, that they who have an opportunity of applying to great numbers of men, either by discourse or writing, have a vast advantage; and they are bound by their fidelity to Christ, and by all that is dear and sacred in truth, religion, and virtue, to improve this advantage to the utmost of their ability. If they scatter abroad the principles of religion, some will fall upon good ground, whence may be expected a plentiful harvest.

The second rule relating to this matter is, "If they persecute you in one city, flee into another," Matt. x. 23. You may decline the heat of men's rage and displeasure, and reserve yourselves for better times, or for more teachable and better disposed persons. Of the first believers after our Lord's ascension it is said: "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church that was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles," Acts viii. 1. It is likely, the apostles had some special directions from the Holy Ghost, not to depart from Jerusalem, and they there enjoyed accordingly a special protection: but the rest of the believers left Jerusalem for the present, and shifted for themselves, as they could, in other parts. Nay we afterwards find apostles also observing this rule. Peter having been delivered out of prison by an angel, after he had been put in custody by Herod, "departed and went to another place," Acts xii. 17. "Of Paul and Barnabas it is related, that when at Iconium "there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews, to use them despitefully; they were aware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lies round about, chap. xiv. 5, 6.

Thirdly, teach men as they are able to bear it. So did our blessed Lord. Says the evangelist: "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it," Mark iv. 33. So he taught the disciples also, delivering some things with some obscurity, because they were not able to bear a plain and full revelation of them: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," John xvi. 12. This may be the fault of men, that they are not able to hear every truth plainly spoken: but yet there must be some compliance and condescension in this respect. "And I, brethren," says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ Jesus. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it," 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. You must therefore, as the apostles did, "become all things to all men, that by all means you may save some," 1 Cor. ix. 22. You are not to depart from your own integrity, nor your proper character: but so far as can be done consistent with these, you are to suit your instructions to men's abilities and conditions.

Fourthly, in this work use great mildness of speech, and meekness of behaviour. You are not to provoke any that are teachable by reflecting on their want of understanding, nor to suffer your zeal to degenerate into rudeness. It has been observed by some, that the apostles of Christ were eminent examples of an excellent decorum in their discourses, and in their whole behaviour. And among other directions to Timothy St. Paul has not failed to recommend particularly meekness of behaviour, as the most likely method of reclaiming men from their errors. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth," 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. That you may gain men to truth and virtue, apply the strongest arguments to their reason and conscience, without a contemptuous treatment of their persons or prejudices.

These gentle methods of reformation will be generally preferred by good men, and may be

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reckoned the most probable means of conviction: but I do not deny, that some faults and follies of men may fitly be ridiculed; and some men may be rebuked sharply by proper persons, and with all authority. All which is no more than putting in practice the direction of Solomon: "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit," Prov. xxvi. 5.

I have now set before you some general rules of prudence, and some particular directions concerning divers branches of conduct. But you are not to suppose, that prudence is to be learned by rules only. It is rather a habit, which must be gained by observation, action and experience. Suffer not yourselves to be embarrassed and perplexed with a great multitude and variety of rules, nor be over solicitous about a proper decorum; for too great anxiety always spoils the performance. In a word, be but fully master of your own character, and possessed of an habitual desire of pleasing, together with a modest persuasion that you shall do well, and you will do so.

There can be no occasion for me to add a particular recommendation of the study of prudence, having before shewn the necessity, and the grounds and reasons of it. The text itself demonstrates the lawfulness and expedience of prudent conduct. Nor can any be altogether insensible of the importance of it to success in life. Virtue, learning, the knowledge of arts and sciences, are like diamonds, that have an intrinsic value, but must be set and polished, before they are fit for show or use. Though divers other natural and acquired accomplishments may procure affection and esteem, it is discretion only that can preserve them.

I am not apprehensive of any abuse of the directions here laid down. They have no tendency to make men selfish or cunning. They are designed for the young and unexperienced; as likewise for the honest, the good-natured, and the generous, of any age and condition. Though you should be simple, they who are designing will practise their arts of subtlety and mischief. By a prudent behaviour you will not encourage their evil practices, but only secure yourselves against them, and be better qualified for success and usefulness in the world.

After all, you are not to depend upon your own care and prudence, but to recommend yourselves and your honest well-laid designs to the divine protection and blessing. It has been seen by those who have diligently observed human counsels and events, "that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all," Ecc. ix. 11. As all human affairs are liable to accidents and disasters, a firm persuasion, and serious regard to the overruling providence of God, which is not limited by the present scene of things, cannot but contribute to your happiness, by preparing your minds for all events, and enabling you to bear afflictions and disappointments with patience.

It may likewise be one good foundation of happiness, to admit but moderate affections for the great things of this world. If you are truly religious, you may be content with a little, and will manage that well. Without a great estate, by frugal and prudent conduct, you may have enough for yourselves, and your immediate dependents; and be able to do good to others also. Happy had it been for some men, as well as for the public, if from the very first, and all their days, they had rather aimed to be wise and good, than rich or great. Finally, if you do good for the sake of doing good, which is a noble principle; and with a view to future rewards, which are incomparably great, and certain: you will not be much concerned, though you miss of present rewards, which you know to be but trifles, and never were your principal aim.

May you then add to virtue prudence, and abound in both yet more and more; that you may escape the snares of the wicked, and the misapprehensions of the weak; may have success in business, acceptance with mankind, happiness in friendship and every private relation; may be useful members of civil society, and of the church of God; may enjoy contentment, and peace of mind in all events: and at length obtain the distinguished recompences, which God, who is infinitely wise and holy, will bestow upon those who have not only been "undefiled in the way," Psalm cxix. 1, but have also advanced the welfare of their fellow-creatures, and the honour of his name in the world.

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A CAUTION AGAINST CONFORMITY TO THIS WORLD:

TWO DISCOURSES ON ROMANS xii. 2.

DISCOURSE I.

And be not conformed to this world. Rom. xii. 2.

This chapter contains directions for the practice of many virtues. It begins with exhortations of a general nature, recommended with great earnestness: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." In the remaining part of the chapter are recommended to Christians divers virtues; such as humility, faithfulness, and diligence in the improvement of their talents and in the discharge of the duties of their several stations, undissembled love of each other, patience under afflictions, a love of peace, forbearance of enemies, and even kindness to them if they are in distress.

My present design is to consider the cautionary direction of the text: "And be not conformed to this world." By the world, as you well know, in the New Testament, and in common discourse, is often meant this present state, and the things of it. It likewise sometimes denotes the sinful customs and practices of men who live in this world; or the bad men of the world who live according to the lusts of the flesh, as if they looked for no other happiness, but what consists in the possessions and enjoyments of this world: and so generally had men abandoned themselves to sin and folly, that Satan is spoken of as the "god of this world," 2 Cor. iv. 4, as if he had been the deity they acknowledged and worshipped.

Indeed before the coming of Christ, and the publication of his gospel, human nature lay in a very deplorable and degenerate condition, being generally involved in great darkness and ignorance, and under the power of irregular and exorbitant appetites and affections: little virtue, either in the Heathen or the Jewish world: things contrary to reason practised by men of every rank: the very principles of the guides and instructors of men too much suited to extenuate vice, or too weak to check the torrent of it; and often recommending little else but a bare performance of external acts of religion, without, and in the stead of, real virtue and true piety.

The apostle therefore now writing to the Christians at Rome, judged it necessary at the beginning of his practical directions, to caution them against being carried away with the stream of irreligion and wickedness: and it is to be feared, that still there may be reason for such a caution. The gospel may have made some considerable alteration in the world. Yea, it ought to be owned, that the world has been greatly reformed and amended thereby. It has blessed many with juster sentiments concerning God and the way of serving him. It has also had a good effect upon the manners of men; and many have been influenced by the good principles they have received. Great numbers have been preserved from sins they otherwise would not have escaped. Others have reached to degrees of virtue which they never would have attained without its assistance: and the number of truly good and upright men is not so small as formerly; but, we may reasonably suppose, much enlarged and increased.

Nevertheless there are many whose lives are not agreeable to the rules of right reason, or the precepts of the Christian religion. And though it should be allowed, or charitably supposed

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and hoped, that they are not now the most, who act contrary to the precepts of religion; yet a caution, not to be conformed to the world, may not be useless or needless. If there are but few who act as men of the world, and are principally influenced by the things of this present life; yet considering the deceitfulness of our hearts, the bias of inclination to some sins, and the force of only a few bad examples (especially where there are many), it may be reasonable to guard against imitation of them, or conformity to others in that which is evil.

In discoursing on this text I shall take the following method:

I. I shall endeavour to shew the design and meaning of this direction.

II. I intend to consider the importance of observing it, and offer some reasons and arguments against conformity to this world.

III. After which, I shall conclude with a few reflections.

1. I shall endeavour to shew the design and meaning of this direction.

And hereby is not to be understood, that we are studiously to avoid all conformity and agreement with men of the world. We all agree in one common nature, and perform the ordinary functions and operations of the animal and rational life: and we are to provide for the wants and necessities of nature, as well as other men. Nor does the apostle design to restrain or forbid a diligent pursuit of the comforts and advantages of this life, in any methods that are lawful and innocent: but what he means is, that we should not be led aside by multitudes, or by any of those we converse with, into the practice of any thing sinful and unlawful.

But beside this general explication of the words, I would mention some particulars, in which we ought not to be conformed to others, how much soever such things may prevail.

1. We are not to be conformed to the world in those sins which are called sins of the flesh. In this caution the apostle very probably has an eye to these things, inasmuch as they were very generally indulged among the heathens, with whom the Christians at Rome were surrounded. So he writes to the Ephesians: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord; *that ye henceforth* walk not as other gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ, *if* so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus; that ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." Eph. iv. 17—22. He requires, that such things be "not once named," ch. v. 3, among Christians; that is, that there be no instances of such transgressions among them: but that they behave "as becometh saints; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," ver. 11. He likewise directs, that "foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient," ver. 4, should quite cease from among them.

Nor are we to indulge ourselves in any intemperance or excess, that disorders the reason, prejudices the health, and indisposes for the duties of life. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess," Eph. v. 18. We are not to be guilty of compliance here. Though some should take it ever so much amiss, that we will not be like them, or bear them company therein, we are resolutely to decline a conformity with them. Thus St. Peter, referring to the prevailing customs of heathens: "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange, that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you," 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. So it was then. And it is to be feared, that still among some, and in some places, this kind of excess is so common, that not a few may be tempted by the customariness of it.

2. Christians are not to be conformed to the world, or the men of it, in any injustice, either in the way of fraud or violence. Says St. Paul to the Ephesians: "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good," Eph. iv. 28. Among the ancient laws of God delivered to the Israelites are such as these: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, a just hin shall ye have. I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt," Lev. xix. 35, 36. Solomon observes: "A false balance is abomination to the Lord; but a just weight is his delight," Prov. xi. 1. And God himself by his prophet reproves prevailing injustice in this manner: "Are there yet the trea-

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sures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?" Mic. vi. 10, 11. Christians then certainly ought to be fair and open in their dealings, and to do to every man what is just. Though we could unobserved detain what is rightfully due to any, we should not withhold it. We are not only to decline unreputable methods of gain, which all men would condemn, and cry out of; but every artifice that is unjust and unequal, however common with some, and secure from the cognizance of human laws. We should be willing to exert ourselves to secure to others their rightful possessions against unjust invaders; but should never employ our power, or art, or influence, for getting into our hands what belongs to others. Though a good man does not choose to be oppressed, and would use all proper measures to secure himself from wrong; yet he would much rather suffer, than do an injury. To be wronged of his possessions, or rightful inheritance, by the artifices of designing persons, might be matter of much grief and concern; but to treat others in such a way, never enters into his heart: nor would any consideration whatever prove a temptation to such fraudulent proceeding. He would rather lose what he has, than gain the greatest estate by an act of injustice.

3. Christians are not to be conformed to the world, or the men of it, in the practice of known falsehood. It is one of St. Paul's practical directions to the Ephesians: "Therefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another," Eph. iv. 25. The words we use are to express the sense of our minds. We are not to promise any thing, but what we intend to do: and when we have promised, we are to perform according to our engagements. Nor does it seem consistent with truth and sincerity to make pompous professions of affection, respect and esteem, beside, and beyond the sense of our minds: creating thereby vain dependences, and big expectations; for our own present interest possibly, but to the real detriment, and lasting and piercing vexation and disappointment of those who have been deceived by us. A Christian also, one would think, should reckon it incumbent on him to have a regard to truth in lesser, as well as in greater matters. However customary it may be with some people to be at the same time at home to some, and abroad to others, and to direct their attendants to deliver a known falsehood, and to persist in it: a man of honour and conscience will scarce encourage, or approve a practice, which is a breach upon sincerity, and may have pernicious consequences.

I need not add here, that if we are not to trangress the rules of veracity in our ordinary discourse and conversation, much less may we falsify upon solemn occasions: when beside the weight of our own credit, we call God to be witness to the truth of what we say.

4. We are not to conform to the world, and the men of it, in a profane use of the name of God. Reverence is always due to the Supreme Being: in which they appear to be defective, who upon trivial occasions appeal to God for the truth of what they say. If any should insist, that they do it sometimes without knowing they do so, or thinking of it: they only shew thereby, that they have been long habituated to a practice which is not to be justified. For, is it not an offence to attest insignificant points with an oath? which is a solemn and awful thing, not to be introduced into society, but for deciding matters of weight and importance. A sober and considerate heathen or deist, who has upon his mind a serious sense of religion, would not approve that the Divine Being should be mentioned, or spoken of in such a light and irreverent manner, as would be judged a contemptuous use of the name of a great man. And shall Christians venture upon such an use of the name of God, who have so much more reason to love and honour him? Is it not strange and surprising, that a sin, to which, as is often said, there is so little temptation, should be so common as it is, among those who are called by that honourable name? But however common it may be among some, chiefly, I think, of the higher and lower ranks of men (in which, as well as in some other things, they too much agree), let us not be conformed to them therein.

Nor can it be fit for us to stake our salvation, or life, or credit, for the truth of matters of little or no consequence, as some frequently do. This is a practice that is not to be reconciled to the reason of any thoughtful and considerate person, who has a sense of religious obligations, and is concerned for the good order and welfare of society. And our blessed Lord has interposed here, and has expressly forbid not only the swearing by the name of God in conversation, and the ordinary commerce of life, but also those lesser, or more diminutive oaths, in which the name of God is not expressly invoked. "Ye have heard, that it has been said by [or rather to]

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them of old time; thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you; swear not at all," Matt. v. 33, 34. Our Saviour does not intend to forbid swearing upon solemn and momentous, but only upon trivial and ordinary occasions: " neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: nor by the earth, for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. These directions of our Lord are sufficiently clear, and easy to be applied by men of these times.

It is unnecessary to add, that if invocations of the Deity in a light manner, and upon trivial occasions, be evil; it is still a more aggravated offence to call upon God to condemn or destroy others upon occasion of none, or very trifling affronts and injuries.

5. We are not to be conformed to the world in idleness and mispending of time. Though it should be the custom of some, or of many around us, to devote their time and abilities to trifling matters, of little or no use and benefit to themselves or others; they are not to be followed or imitated by us. Diversions are allowable, if they are innocent in themselves, and if they are made use of by us as a refreshment of our wearied spirits, and that we may be better fitted for employments of a higher nature. But diversions are not to be suffered to grow up into constant employments, and to thrust out useful and necessary business. Then they become sinful: for this life is our only opportunity of providing for eternity: and therefore it would be lost, if spent in eating and drinking, and playing, without making preparation for a future state. If we rightly consider the shortness of life, the work we have to do, the many avocations that are almost unavoidable; we shall think, that time ought not to be squandered and thrown away, but improved with care and diligence.

A large part of most men's time is requisite for providing the necessaries, or comforts and conveniences of life. If they should indulge sloth and idleness, they would be reduced to want and poverty. If the necessaries and comforts of life are provided to our hand for us, we may be well employed in improving our minds, and in serving and helping others.

And do we think, that we have no occasion to employ some time in private, in serious meditation and reflection upon ourselves, and our more public and ordinary conduct? Are we satisfied that all is right already, and that our behaviour is without fault, or that there is no room left for amendment? May it not be of use to take some time to review our diversions and amusements, our transactions in business, and even our acts of public worship?

Time very often runs waste in conversation, and yet we ought not to be unsociable and unfriendly. Should we not therefore be glad to render that time more profitable? As for those who have superior abilities, or any superior advantage in point of age, character and station: may they not do well to aim at raising and improving friendly conversation? and should not others be ready to join in such attempts, and to set forward those topics that are instructive and edifying, as well as entertaining? that those seasons may not be altogether, and always, void and empty spaces, of which we can give no good account; but useful and beneficial: such as all may be able to reflect upon with pleasure, and some with thankfulness, long afterwards.

6. We are not to be conformed to the world in a censorious temper, and detracting speech and discourse. Some there are, who scarce think any thing well done, but what is done by themselves: who have a mean opinion of the abilities and performances of other men, or seem to have so: and by artfully lessening and detracting from them, they endeavour to bring the rest of mankind into the like sentiment.

Some men have a vast acquaintance with the private affairs and actions of their neighbours, but more especially, as it seems, with their weaknesses and failings: and having a good deal of knowledge of this kind, it is not easy for them to hide such a treasure. Men who have a great deal of knowledge are usually fond of shewing it, and sometimes even among those, who set no value upon the sciences they are masters of: but men are apt to be communicative of this knowledge above any other, because discoveries of this sort are generally acceptable: the smallest trifle of this nature being more eagerly sought, and more readily embraced by abundance of people, than relations of great and noble actions.

There can be no good reason, why men should be prying and inquisitive into the private affairs of families, or particular persons. When such things are known, there can be very seldom any good purpose served by divulging them. If they are mentioned at all, certainly there can

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be no good reason for giving them a wrong turn, making things appear worse than they are, concealing circumstances, that might alleviate an imprudence; and possibly adding some others, that tend to aggravate and enhance it.

This must be owned to be an unreasonable practice: but yet it is not uncommon. Though every man is tender of his own good name, how many act, as if the reputation of other men and their families was a thing of small value in their esteem!

We are therefore to be upon our guard here. We are not to form and raise stories to the prejudice of others. Nor are we to report what we have heard without reserve, or caution, or any good occasion for so doing. Nay, it might be well if sometimes we would decline receiving relations of this kind, that the practice of tale-bearing may be the more effectually discouraged: or, if we cannot well avoid hearing them, however doing it without any satisfaction, real or apparent, and diverting the discourse to other matters, as soon as may be.

If we do not arrive at this degree of perfection, yet let us take heed, that we be not rash and severe in our censures; nor condemn and exclaim against actions and conduct, of which we know but very few circumstances.

We are all too apt to transgress in many things, and in few things more, than in an abuse of the faculty of speech. Says St. James: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing, that we shall receive the greater condemnation: for in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body," James iii. 1, 2.

I might here particularly caution and argue against loading men with censures and reproaches on account of their differing from us in matters of speculation. For whereas upon other occasions some turn the imprudences of others into heinous sins; here men often make that a crime which is a virtue. They censure men as abandoned of God, and in a state of damnation, for believing certain opinions, which possibly are true and reasonable: but if they be false, still those persons would not deserve to be severely censured by us, if they have honestly used their best endeavours in the search of truth. Let us not be conformed to others in such a temper and conduct as this. But when men differ from us, let us take the more favourable side of the question; and hope, that though they are mistaken, as we think, yet they do not err wilfully, or obstinately, but that they are open to conviction, and are sincere and upright. But at present I say no more of this matter.[a]

7. We are not to be conformed to this world, or the men of it, in a luxurious and extravagant course of life. And, have we not reason to be upon our guard here? Is not this a prevailing and general fault? Has it not invaded all ranks and orders of men? Is not this one of the sins of our days? And does it not manifestly bring upon us many distresses and calamities, and threaten us with more? Does not extravagance prevail, not in one thing only, but in all? Is it not seen in diet, apparel, furniture, equipage, diversions, and in every article of expense that can be named?

What can be said in defence of that[b] gaming, in various forms, which has been so greatly improved and cultivated; in which great numbers of people have attained such exquisite skill and understanding? Is not this the ordinary diversion, or rather business of many among us; of rich and poor, high and low, young and old? Are there not numerous instances of this practice, which are plainly, and extremely unreasonable? Certainly, it cannot but be offensive to see those gaming for sums of money, be they greater or smaller, who, so far as can be judged by their outward appearance, are extremely destitute: and it must be a manifest and heinous immorality, for men to mispend time, and hazard sums of money in this way, whose families are unprovided with things necessary for their support.

If then transgressions of this kind are common with any of our rank and acquaintance, we ought to be upon our guard, and take heed that we be not conformed to them. For gaming is altogether improper for some: and to be addicted to it, or to hazard large sums of money this way, must be unreasonable in all. The loss of time, hazard of estate, health, temper and virtue, with which this practice is attended, should either entirely deter men from it, or at least induce them to be very careful not to exceed.

But this is not the only thing to be avoided by us. There are many other ways of profuse-

[a] If any should find this discourse too long for one reading, they may break off here.

[b] Since these discourses were composed and pronounced, an Act of Parliament has passed for the more effectual preventing of excessive and deceitful gaming. All wise men, I am persuaded, agree in wishing it may have a good effect.

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ness: and, when this is the case: when frugality is unreputable; when economy is thought to be below all people of rank, of both sexes; when they who make a decent appearance, and pay to all what is justly due to them, and relieve and support distressed families, and are liberal in promoting divers good works: when such as these can scarce maintain their credit in the world, for want of pomp and splendour, and a glittering shew and appearance; then certainly we have need to be upon our guard against that profuseness, which is above our circumstances, which might exhaust our substance, involve us in perplexing and inextricable difficulties, and hazard the total loss of that little virtue that remains in us.

8. Another thing, in which we ought not to be conformed to this world, is uncharitableness in things of a religious concern. This we may have reason to guard against: for the pride of our hearts, the good opinion we are too apt to have of ourselves, disposes us very much to be offended with those who differ from us. Therefore, if unfavourable sentiments of some persons, and a severe treatment of them, be common, we are in great danger of being misled. Indeed this has often been a common, though it be an heinous injustice. It has been common among those who have been the people of God by profession, as well as among ignorant heathens and idolaters. How strangely a blind zeal, or uncharitable temper toward such as differed from them, raged among the Jewish people, we see in the history of the New Testament; particularly in their treatment of the apostle Paul, and other harmless disciples and followers of Jesus Christ. If we were to look into the history of Christianity, since it prevailed in the Roman empire, and observe the conduct of the several sects and parties of Christians; we should find it a difficult undertaking to vindicate the conduct of any one of them, when they have been uppermost, and have had power in their hands. Scarce any age or period, but affords instances of hard and unrighteous treatment of men for the sake of some differences in religious opinions. Very few of those who have had the chief direction of church-affairs, who have not been blameable for some rigour and uncharitableness in sentiment or practice. And oftentimes they who by their stations have been guides and teachers of others, have earnestly inculcated such a zeal, such a temper and conduct toward those who have not been in all things of the same mind with them, as is extremely unrighteous and unmerciful. Nor are they those only who are chief in power that are guilty in this respect: for they also who are few in number, and of small authority, in comparison of others, will sometimes assume, and become imperious and uncharitable toward those who differ from them in these points.

This then is a very common fault; and because common, the greater care and circumspection are necessary: for every one has a right to think for himself, and is obliged to determine according to the best of his own judgment and understanding: and it is a duty incumbent upon every one to inquire seriously into the things of religion, and to judge according to evidence. Therefore no man, or body of men, civil or ecclesiastical, can have a right to impose religious creeds or articles upon other men, and to punish them for not assenting to them. Any one may propose reasons and arguments in behalf of his opinions: but no man ought to enforce assent any further than his arguments convince.

It is true, no one has a right to do, or teach any thing, that is contrary to the peace of society. That is the magistrate's province. But where opinions are innocent, and have no direct tendency to disturb the peace and quiet of others, and men are guilty of no injustice, they have a right to the protection of the power of the society in which they live, and ought to enjoy the privileges of peaceable subjects.

And that we ought to avoid a persecuting, and a malevolent temper and conduct with regard to men of different sentiments, and to practise much tenderness, mildness, forbearance and love, is apparent not only from the reason and fitness of things, as just now hinted, but also from the conduct and example of our blessed Lord and his apostles, and from the mildness of the principles and precepts of the Christian religion, as recorded in the books of the New Testament; which was not planted and spread in the world by force and violence, by human authority, and the power of the sword, but by reason and argument, and the example of a holy and amiable life and conversation. Moreover, the Christian religion did by the like means spread and prevail for a good while after the death of Christ's apostles, and their fellow-labourers, without human supports, and notwithstanding frequent and violent persecutions. And though the favour of the civil power and authority, upon the conversion of Constantine, might be an advantage for a while: yet I suppose, it may be allowed to be a just observation, that since Christians,

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instead of being persecuted, as they had been by Jews and Heathens, have persecuted one another, Christianity has made little progress, but has rather lost ground. For the once numerous and flourishing churches of the East, and in a large part of Africa, have been all, in a manner, long since swallowed up in Mahometism. And I presume, it may much dispose us to moderation to observe, that where there is the most rigid imposition, and tyrannical government, as in the church of Rome, there are the grossest errors, and the most unreasonable superstitions, together with a very deplorable corruption of manners, especially where that ecclesiastical tyranny is at the greatest height.

Let us not then be afraid of religious liberty, as prejudicial and unfriendly to truth. Let us not by any means concur in any methods of rigour and severity toward men of different sentiments, as thinking thereby to promote the interest of religion and virtue. For beside that such methods are in themselves unreasonable and unrighteous, they are also detrimental to the cause of truth.

9. Another thing, in which we ought not to follow others, is indifference about the things of religion. Of this men may be in danger on various accounts. Considering the many differences and dissensions there are upon this head; the animosity and fierceness with which religious disputes are often managed; the many abuses of religion, that is, its name and profession, by hypocritical, artful, and self-interested men; some may be apt to take offence, and to determine, no more to concern themselves about it, but let all things abroad have their course; whilst they, for their part, secure, as far as possible, their own present worldly ease and advantage.

Others may be in danger of much indolence upon this head from other considerations. Religion, say they, is an abstruse and difficult thing. Let us therefore acquiesce in the determinations of our superiors and governors in church and state, and believe as they require: or, let us follow those to whom we are allied, and do as they desire, especially if they are at all importunate, without giving ourselves any pain about this matter.

But this indifference and indolence ought to be guarded against. Whatever dissensions there are in the world, partly through human weakness, partly through human wickedness and deceit, there is a difference of things. Truth and virtue are realities, built upon solid foundations: and with care and attention the great and general principles of true religion, and the main branches of virtue, may be discerned from error and vice.

Every man therefore should endeavour, to the best of his power, according to the circumstances he is in, to know and understand the chief things of religion, and the grounds and evidences of them. He should be disposed to profess the truth so far as he is acquainted with it, and to appear among those, who make a public acknowledgment of the great Creator and Sovereign of the world, and of that revelation which he has made of his will to mankind. He should be concerned for the rights of conscience in general, and be heartily desirous that all men may enjoy the privilege of worshipping God according to their light and knowledge. He should never join in oppressing others for conscience sake: but according to his station and circumstances should oppose such measures, and vindicate those who are any way injuriously treated on account of their religious sentiments.

10, and lastly, We are not to be conformed to the world, or the men of it, in an excessive and inordinate affection for earthly and temporal things. We are not to act as if this world were our home, and the things of it our portion and our all. We should be more moderate in our desires of temporal good things, and less afraid of the evils and sufferings of this life, than many are. If some seek the things of this world, more than those of another; and, if disappointments in such pursuits plunge them into incurable grief and distress; we should be cautious of such intemperate affection for earthly things. If some are unreasonably transported with successes in their worldly designs, and are elated thereby beyond measure, so as to treat others with scorn and disdain; we should be ashamed of such misbehaviour. If we are blessed in like manner, let us thankfully own the goodness of God; but "rejoice as though we rejoiced not, because the fashion of this world passeth away," 1 Cor. vii. 30, 31.

Do many repine and murmur against God, because they are not prospered, as some others are? and is there among men a general uneasiness with their own circumstances? We should be contented and resigned; that it may appear, we acknowledge the over-ruling providence of God, and that there are other sources of joy and satisfaction, beside increase and abundance of worldly goods. Whatever condition we are in, especially if we are in any higher station, let us

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not "seek our own" interest only, as too many do, "but every one" of us also "another's wealth," 1 Cor. x. 24.

In these things we are not to follow or imitate other men; nor in any thing else that is dishonourable to the majesty of God, or that debaseth, and is unworthy of our rational and immortal nature, or that is injurious to our fellow-creatures. In other things, which are not contrary to reason, or express revelation, we may do as others do: we may enjoy the same comforts, follow the same employments, take the same diversions, that others do; and may use the language of the place and country and time, wherein we live. For I do not intend to cast a snare before you, or raise groundless and needless scruples in any man's mind. It is not my design absolutely to condemn music, or dancing, or those diversions, in which chance, or hazard, has a part, as well as skill; or those entertainments, in which are represented the humours and manners of men, and the revolutions of states and empires, or the vicissitudes of particular persons. These things I do not look upon, as in themselves, and always evil. They then only become evil, when they are perverted, or abused (as I fear they often are) or when they are accidentally evil, or hurtful to us, for want of prudent circumspection; which is necessary every where, and at all times, and more especially upon some occasions.

But then the restrictions and cautions before mentioned ought to be here remembered. Men are not to waste their time, or their substance, in diversions and amusement. They ought not to hazard any large part of their substance, the loss of which might be any considerable inconvenience to them. They should decline such games as greatly engage them, and too much raise their passions. Men may do well to take heed, that no amusements rob them of their wisdom, or their seriousness, or their importance in life. If any indecency appear in the entertainments set before them, they ought to detest and resent it, to shew their dislike and abhorrence of it, and to discountenance it in the way best suited to their station and character. We ought ever to be careful to avoid familiarity with the wicked: and it should be esteemed a point of prudence rarely to be neglected, especially by young persons, not to venture alone where there is any danger, but to secure to themselves the company of some sober and religious associates; whose presence may keep off some temptations, or give a check to them.

It is almost needless for me to add, that I do not understand, or explain this text, as regulating men's outward garb. A good man may without scruple follow the fashion of his country, and the habit of others about him, of the like rank and station in the world. St. Peter indeed gives such directions as these to women, especially the married: "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price," 1 Pet. iii. 3. But it is easy to perceive that what this apostle intends hereby is, that such should esteem the ornaments of the mind above those of the body, and be more concerned about that which is inward, than that which is outward. God declares to the Jews by the prophet Hosea: "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice," Hos. vi. 6. But no one understands thereby, that God had not desired sacrifice at all, but that he preferred mercy above sacrifice, or desired the one more than the other: as appears also from what immediately follows: "and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." So likewise our Lord says: "Lay not up to yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt: but lay up to yourself treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal," Matt. vi. 19, 20. He does not absolutely forbid to seek, or lay up earthly treasures; but he teaches men to prefer heavenly and incorruptible above earthly and corruptible treasures, and to be more concerned for the one than the other. These observations are to be applied to the like excellent advices of the apostle Paul upon the same subject: "In like manner also, (I will) that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works," 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

This text then is not a caution against complying with others in things in which there is no harm, but against following men in that which is really evil and sinful.

I should now proceed to shew the importance of observing this cautionary direction, according to the explication that has been given, in its several branches and articles. But that, with a reflection by way of conclusion, must be deferred to another opportunity.

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DISCOURSE II.

And be not conformed to this world.—Rom. xii. 2.

In discoursing on these words, I have proposed, in the first place, to shew the design and meaning of this direction, "Be not conformed to this world:" secondly, to shew the importance of observing it; and then to add a reflection or two by way of conclusion.

II. Having formerly explained this cautionary direction, I now proceed to the second head of discourse; to shew the importance of observing it, and to offer some reasons and arguments against conformity to this world.

1. It is plain that the wise and holy apostle esteemed this a thing of no small moment. This caution is placed almost at the head of the practical directions, with which he concludes this large and copious epistle to the Romans: and I suppose, that the earnestness, with which this address begins, ought to be understood to be continued and carried on in the words of the text. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service," ver. 1. It follows: "And be not conformed to this world." As if he had said: and by the consideration of the same mercies of God, in which you, as Christians, have partaken abundantly, be persuaded not to be conformed to this world, and to be upon your guard against complying with the men of it in any thing that is evil.

2. By no means, upon no account, be ye like the men of this world in any of their evil and corrupt practices. Though you live where sin abounds, and where some sins are even fashionable, you are to keep yourselves free from them. Though such things should be practised and indulged, not only by many, but by the most, and those who by means of their wit and fine parts, or by their high quality and station in the world, can give reputation to whatever they do, and make almost any thing appear graceful; you are not to be moved from your stedfastness in virtue, or from those purposes you have formed upon a serious and deliberate view and consideration of things.

Though our lot should be cast in times and places, in which there are few who love true religion, and walk in the path of virtue; and though these few should be mean in their outward appearance; let us be contented to have our portion with them: and though in the way of irreligion and vice should be found the learned, the rich, the great and honourable of this world; let us not be drawn aside by their example. We ought not to be induced to any compliances that are sinful. This is a forbidden and dangerous complaisance. We may part with what else we will for peace sake, and for the good of others: but we can do no man any good upon the whole by parting with our integrity. I say upon the whole: for possibly by some acts of wickedness the present temporal interest of some particular persons may be advanced: but it is a most unreasonable thing, that one man should hazard his eternal salvation for the sake of the temporal grandeur of another: and besides, he who upon any considerations whatever violates the laws of God and reason, sets his neighbour a pernicious example, that may harden him in sin to his final and utter ruin.

Let us not then go over to those who are involved in the practice of vice: but let us do all that lies in our power to bring them over to the love and practice of true holiness: and for this end let us endeavour to set religion in a good light. Let our conversation be an example of strict virtue without austerity. If our mirth be without levity, let us also be serious without moroseness or peevishness. Above all, let our religion be sincere and undissembled; not an empty, though solemn profession, but a real principle, producing the good fruits of righteousness, gentleness and mercy.

3. Herein, it must be owned, there is no small difficulty; but there is a necessity of it, unless the world were so reformed that all in general were wise and good. Our blessed Lord therefore says: "Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," Matt. vii. 13, 14. And says St. John: "We know, that whosoever is born of God sinneth not: but he that is begotten of God

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keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness," 1 John v. 18.

4. It is an ancient precept in the law of Moses: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil," Ex. xxiii. 2. And Solomon says: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not: my son, walk thou not in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path," Prov. i. 10. 15. It has been always esteemed by wise men a noble and commendable resolution of Joshua: "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord," Josh. xxiv. 15, though all the tribes, and other families of Israel, should forsake the Lord, and go after other gods. But Christians are better fortified against the temptations of numerous examples than other men, and have stronger motives to steadfastness in virtue. They know better than others the excellency and obligations of true holiness, the deformity of sin, and the different consequences of each. If it would be a fault in other men, it must be much more so in them to be influenced by numbers to forsake the paths of religion and virtue.

5. And though the number of the sincerely good and resolutely virtuous may be small in a comparative view, yet they are more than a few upon the whole. Some there have been in all ages, who have approved themselves to God and their own consciences. The apostle to the Hebrews having given a catalogue of excellent persons from almost the beginning of time, some of whom "endured the trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, being destitute, afflicted, tormented," Heb. xi. animates the Christians of his days with the consideration of their number, when collected together. "Wherefore," says he, "seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," ch. xii. 1.

6. Some singularity, or eminence, and uncommon steadfastness in that which is truly good and excellent, is very becoming, and even expedient in Christians. How can it be otherwise? If the principles and precepts of their religion be more sublime, pure, and perfect than those of any other religion, and have a suitable influence; must they not necessarily create some difference between them and other men? They are certainly obliged to act according to the truths they have received. They gladly would, that others should keep them company: but if they obstinately refuse, and will not be persuaded, they must leave them behind, and follow Jesus whither he leads them. "If ye were of the world," says our Lord to his disciples, "the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you," John xv. 19. Christ supposeth, that as his people are not of the world, so they will often meet with disagreeable treatment in it: but they are to remember their character, and to endeavour to excel, and thereby to be useful. After this manner he speaks to his people and followers: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," Matt. v. 13—16. Says St. Paul to the Ephesians: "Be not ye partakers with them; for ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord," Eph. v. 7, 8. Once more, in the epistle to the Philippians: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world," Philip. ii. 15.

7. Our blessed Lord highly approves, and will reward and distinguish those who are faithful to him in the midst of temptations, and uphold the honour of his name in the world. He said to his disciples: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," Luke xii. 32. In the book of the Revelation he encourages some by his servant John: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment: and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels," Rev. iii. 4, 5.

8. Finally, there will be much comfort and satisfaction of mind resulting from this conduct, even in this world. The context suggests this argument. "Present your bodies," give up yourselves sincerely to God, as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your

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mind." Let the temper of your mind become truly religious, spiritual and heavenly, instead of being any longer sensual and carnal: "that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Then you will not only know and discern, but approve, and delightfully perform that reasonable and excellent worship and obedience, which the gospel requires. Hold on then in the way of religion and virtue, notwithstanding the temptations you meet with to decline and forsake it. The pleasure will be great, your comforts will grow and increase, and you will more and more approve the choice you have made as wise and reasonable.

III. I shall now conclude with a few reflections.

1. "Be not conformed to this world." Is there occasion for such a caution as this? Is the world in which we live degenerate and corrupt? and are we liable to be misled and ensnared by it? May not this dispose us to a life of privacy and retirement? or reconcile us to it, if it be our lot? Must not this also abate our affection for this world, and life therein, and increase our willingness to depart out of it, whenever God pleaseth? If we be continued in the world, and act therein, let us take care, both that we be not ensnared ourselves, and that no one be the worse for us. Let us scorn to give any countenance and support to falshood or vice. Let us esteem it our indispensable duty to answer the ends of life. If preferment will not be obtained but by base and sinful compliances, let us give over all thoughts of rising in the world. If we cannot keep our station without parting with our integrity, let us resign it. It is better to live with a good conscience in obscurity and contempt, than to enjoy the caresses and applauses of fellow-creatures in the way of falshood and iniquity. Better, I say: for the end of such will be happy and glorious. The Psalmist of old could say: "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness: for the Lord God is a sun and a shield. The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from him that walketh uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee," Psalm lxxxiv.

2. Let us each one, in our several stations and circumstances, attend to this caution: "Be not conformed to this world."

You that are young possibly will admit to be warned and admonished. I shall therefore remind you of a few particulars. To persons of your age the world and many things therein have peculiar charms; and what is customary and reputable comes to you with strong recommendations, and must be very taking. You are desirous of esteem, and think it fit and becoming in such as you to lay hold of that which tends to render you acceptable and agreeable; or to raise and advance you in the world. But, if you have a serious sense of religious things, you must be aware that you are not to follow the example of others, whether right or wrong. You will do well therefore, whilst you are setting out in the world, to form a fixed purpose and resolution of mind, that you will govern yourselves by the rules of reason and revelation. Take heed that the commonness of some sins never abate the horror and dread you once had of them. Avoid friendship and intimacy with the corrupt and degenerate part of mankind; "lest you learn their ways, and get a snare to your soul," Prov. xxii. 25. Let your usual companions be such as appear to have impressions of religion upon their minds, and walk in the paths of virtue. You will be helpful to each other; good beginnings will be cherished and improved, and you will keep one another in countenance, if you should meet with some, who are so vile and daring, as to scoff at religion and virtue, and ridicule your conscientious respect to the obligations of either.

But, beside the young, there are others also, to whom this cautionary direction might be addressed, if they would receive it: for, as the young are liable to be seduced by their companions and equals; so likewise they who are of mature age may be in danger of being misled by the bad example of some of their equals in age and station; or by some of superior station, influence and authority; who to outward appearance are serious and attentive, but it is only to the honours, riches, preferments, state, and grandeur of this world. Our Lord freely reproved such people, and warned others against them; as may be seen at large in the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, and elsewhere. "Then spake Jesus unto the multitude and to his disciples, saying: The scribes and pharisees sit in Moses's seat. All therefore whatever they bid you observe, that observe and do: but do ye not after their works: for they say and do not," Matt. xxiii. 1—3. "But all their works they do to be seen of men," ver. 5. "But woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites: for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. For ye neither go in yourselves,

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neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in," ver. 13. Our Lord charged his disciples to "beware of the leaven of the pharisees, which is hypocrisy," Luke xii. 1. These men had an outward appearance of sanctity, and were greatly esteemed by many. Nevertheless they were plainly influenced by selfish views, which prejudiced them against the truth, and led them also to obstruct and discountenance those who were well-disposed to it. "How can ye believe," said our Lord to some of them, "which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" John v. 44. St. Paul observes to Titus, that some "teach things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake," Tit. i. 11. "But," says he, "speak thou the things which become sound doctrine," ch. ii. 1. He earnestly cautions Timothy against a covetous disposition, which had been fatal to some, who had taken upon them the profession of the Christian religion; saying, "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness," 1 Tim. vi. 10, 11. An undue love of wealth, honour, influence and authority, may be as prejudicial to the interests of religion in a man's mind, as an inordinate love of sensual pleasure; and there may be as much need for some to guard against the example of the formal, who are covetous, ambitious and aspiring, as for others to be upon their guard against that of the gay and voluptuous, the thoughtless and inconsiderate.

Let us then all attend to this cautionary direction, and the thoughts annexed to it in the same verse: "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind; that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God."

And let us beg of God to assist us in resisting the temptations of a vain world: that we may never be induced to follow a multitude in that which is evil; but may be followers of those, who in ancient or later times, have given an example of lively faith and stedfast virtue: that we may at length sit down with them, not only in peace and safety, but in the plentiful possession of the truest riches, and the full enjoyment of the purest and sublimest entertainments, in the kingdom of heaven for ever and ever. Amen.

A

SERMON

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

THE LATE REV. WILLIAM HARRIS, D.D.

WHO DIED MAY 25, 1740, ÆT. LXV.

DEDICATION.

To the congregation of Protestant Dissenters, meeting in Crouched Friars, London, this sermon, occasioned by the death of their late honoured and worthy pastor, the Rev. Dr. William Harris, and published at their request, is inscribed by their humble servant,

N. LARDNER.

When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.
2 Thess. i. 10.

WHEN our Lord comes again, he comes to judge the world, and to reward every man according to his works; as the apostle writes in his context to the Christians at Thessalonica, who

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suffered persecution for the gospel: "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us: when the Lord shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe:" that is, when he shall come to be glorified, in the eye of the whole world, in the punishments inflicted on the final and irreconcileable enemies of God and religion, and in the glorious and happy circumstances of those who have sincerely embraced the truth, and have been under the power and influence of it.

We may improve these words, by observing and enlarging somewhat upon these three propositions.

I. Christ will come again.

II. When he comes, he will be glorified in the happy and advantageous circumstances of his people.

III. He will be admired by all who have believed in him, and continued faithful to the end.

Prop. I. Christ will come again. This is no less certain, than that he once dwelt on this earth. The time is still a secret to us, and perhaps to all orders of intelligent creatures: but the thing itself is undoubted. He will come again at the time appointed of the Father, as St. Peter observes in one of his first sermons after the descent of the spirit: "whom the heavens must receive, till the time of the restitution of all things," Acts iii. 21. At the very instant of his ascension, his disciples were expressly assured of it by two angels: "This same Jesus," say they, "which is taken up from you into heaven, shall soon come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven," Acts i. 11. Our Lord himself often spoke of it to his disciples, and with the fullest assurance of the certainty of the event. "I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also," John xiv. 2, 3. But he never acquaints them with the time: and because, for wise reasons, that is kept secret, he frequently exhorts them to watchfulness and circumspection. "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour, when the Son of man cometh."

But though the time is unknown, the second coming of their Lord is no less the object of the faith of God's people now, than his first coming was of the saints under former dispensations: and the fulfilment of ancient predictions, in his first coming, confirms the hope of his appearing again. Nor is the great design of his coming into this world as yet accomplished. He will therefore certainly come once more, to complete the work he has begun.

We also know some of the circumstances of his expected coming, which are very different from those of the first. Then he was in the form of a servant. Hereafter he will appear in the character of the universal Lord and Judge: "he will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire: he will come in the glory of the Father, and all the holy angels with him: he will sit on the throne of his glory, and before him will be gathered all nations."

Prop. II. When Christ comes again, he will be glorified in the happy and advantageous circumstances of his people. Here we may observe two things: first, what there will be, at that time, in their circumstances, which will reflect honour upon him. Secondly, what perfections in him will then be glorified and appear illustrious.

1. First, what there will be, at that time, in the circumstances of his people, that will reflect honour and lustre upon him. There will be such things as these; the perfection of their holiness, their external glory, and their great number.

1.) One thing in Christ's people, which will then reflect honour upon him, is the perfection of their holiness. They, who then appear among his people, and are owned by him, are such as had believed in him, and served him faithfully in this world. The virtue of these, which here had some alloys and imperfections, will then be completed. "The church, which he loved, and for which he gave himself, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, will" then "be presented to him a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, being holy and without blemish," Eph. v. 25—27.

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2.) Another thing in his people that will reflect honour upon him is their external glory, or the lustre of their persons; their bodies being then raised up immortal, and no more liable to death, or diseases. Soul and body are reunited, free from all the infirmities of sinful and mortal flesh. They have enlarged capacities, fitted for the noblest services; celestial minds, and celestial bodies; bodies no longer clogs to the soul in its divine employments, but made fit for a partnership with it in uninterrupted, endless praise and happiness. The representations, which the scripture gives us of this glory of the saints, are to this purpose: "So also is the resurrection of the dead: it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body—The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven. And as we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," 1 Cor. xv. 42—49. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," Philip. iii. 21. So St. Paul. And, says another apostle: "It does not yet appear, what we shall be: but this we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2.

3.) In the day of his second coming, Christ will be glorified in the number and great multitude of his saints. He himself once spoke of his disciples and people, as a "little flock," Luke xii. 32. It was so then indeed. Few there were that believed in him; fewer still, who had the courage to own him publicly, and before the world. Most men were then ignorant of him, or offended at him: and oftentimes his professed visible people have made but a small and inconsiderable appearance, in comparison of the rest of the world: but in that day, the number of his redeemed ones will appear to be a great multitude; when all who have held the faith of Jesus, or died in the hope and expectation of him, in any age, shall be gathered together from all the ends of the earth, and shall come from the east and the west to meet their triumphant Lord. Says St. John in the Revelation: "After this I beheld, and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying: salvation unto our God, which sitteth on the throne, and unto the lamb," Rev. vii. 9, 10.

If Christ's people and followers should not then appear to be so numerous, as those who have not known him, or not obeyed him; yet they may, as they certainly will, be a great number, exceeding what the contracted charity, or the melancholy apprehensions of some now admit of and suppose. There may be many among his saints, not only out of all nations and people, but also out of all sects and parties; some of which were far from being very conspicuous or renowned on this earth.

There will be many of all ranks, of different gifts and attainments: some, of great learning, and the most exalted capacity; who preferred the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and him crucified, above all other science, as best suited to secure the practice of virtue, and advance it to the greatest perfection; and to support the mind under the afflictions of this life. Others there will be, of meaner capacities, unable by the exercise of their own reason, to trace out the principles and obligations of religion and virtue, or to comprehend the abstruse speculations, and profound reasonings of the philosopher; who from the doctrine, miraculous works, great example, conspicuous and well-attested death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, have learned the nature and obligation of true religion, as consisting in the love of God and our neighbour, and the certainty of future recompences; and have been engaged thereby to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Some there will be in this number, who had gone far from God, and been greatly entangled in the snares of an evil world, and were in the utmost danger of everlasting perdition; who having been pierced with a sense of sin, and drawn by the gracious invitations of the gospel, became sincere penitents, and eminent saints. Others, who having been educated in the principles of the Christian doctrine, and having been from the beginning under the impressions of them, continued to walk with Christ in white, and kept their garments clean, unspotted from the world. There will be here a glorious appearance of such as bought the truth, and would not sell it; who took the kingdom of heaven by violence, and chose the narrow path of virtue that leads to the sight of God and the heavenly life: when they, who should have animated and encouraged them by their counsel and example, laid obstacles in their way, and would have persuaded them

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rather to seek the ease, riches, honours and preferments of this present world. Some there will be of large minds, who studied the principles of reason and revelation, and were well acquainted with the mind of Christ; who here earnestly recommended general benevolence, promoted peace and friendship among men, and happily prevented contentions and divisions. These will have distinguished honour in that day: and some others, possibly, shall not miss of the divine favour, who from false apprehensions, and a mistaken zeal, had been here too apt to reject some, whom they should have received as brethren in Christ, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance. There will be some, who in this state of trial had done honour to religion, by a cheerful, as well as steady obedience. They had a comfortable persuasion of the divine favour and acceptance, and they rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. They could say: "The life, which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. ii. 20. They will triumph and exult, when Christ, the judge of all, shall confirm the testimony they had in their minds, that they were the children of God. Others there will be, men of true simplicity and integrity, but dejected and low-spirited. They hoped, but could never fully clear up to their satisfaction, that they loved God; nor arrive at a settled persuasion, that they were loved of him; who, when the "books shall be opened," will know, to their unspeakable joy, that "their names" also "were written in the book of life," Rev. xx. 12. There will be a great number, who here on earth were despised of men, and lived in mean condition; who will be owned by Christ for his people, as having been resigned, contented, thankful in the circumstances allotted them by Divine Providence. There will be many, who had honoured the Lord with their substance, who "clothed the naked, fed the hungry, visited the sick," and spoke comfortably to those who were cast down. There will be many who had gone through great tribulation, who laboured and did not faint; a noble and numerous company of martyrs and confessors, who took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, or laid down their lives in testimony to the truth.

Will not this multitude of such persons reflect honour upon him, by whom they were redeemed; through whose means they were carried safe through the temptations of this world, and were enabled to persevere to the end, notwithstanding the difficulties they met with? If it be true, as it certainly is, that "they who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever," Dan. xii. 3. how glorious is Jesus, the source of this wisdom, the spring of this zeal for truth and virtue!

2. Secondly, we are to consider, what perfections in Christ will then be glorified, and appear illustrious: and it is reasonable to suppose, that his wisdom, his power, and his faithfulness will then be very conspicuous.

1.) His wisdom. The preaching of the cross has appeared foolishness to many in this world: but then it will be manifest, beyond the possibility of farther doubt and question, that "the foolishness of God," 1 Cor. i. 25. that divine dispensation, which many had despised, was wiser than all the wisdom of men. Some indeed, yea not a few, do now perceive and acknowledge it to be a well-laid design, admirably suited to the weakness and degeneracy of the human nature: and they are ready to say with the apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! and that God hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." But at that time, the contrivance of this dispensation will appear still more wonderful. It will be manifest, particularly in the great number of the saints then collected, and brought together in one, from the several parts of the world; to whom "Christ has been made of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30.

It is indeed a vast and delightful scene of contemplation, which will then lie open to the saints; to observe the original design, several steps, continued progress, and final completion of the recovery and salvation of so many frail and sinful men, by Jesus Christ; and to observe the extent of his government of the church, and the world in general, in the several parts and ages of it, from the time of his exaltation to the right hand of the throne of God, to that great and glorious day, when all mankind are brought before his tribunal.

2.) At that time the power of Christ will be glorified. It will appear great and wonderful in the resurrection of the saints, just performed by his word. This is what our Lord spoke of, as so marvellous, in answer to some cavils of the Jews: "For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doth: and he will shew him greater things than these, that ye may marvel: for as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son

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quickeneth whom he will——Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation," John v. 20—29.

3.) Another perfection, to be glorified at that time, is the truth or faithfulness of Christ. This is the day for the full accomplishment of all his promises, upon which his people have depended, and by which they have been animated in the whole of their course. Here he delivered rules of life, and made gracious promises to such as obeyed them. He encouraged men to forsake all earthly goods for his sake and the gospel's, assuring them of abundant recompense hereafter. In his conference with Nicodemus he useth these expressions: "Verily I say unto thee: we speak what we do know, and testify that we have seen." John iii. 11. In his preaching he publicly declared with the greatest solemnity: "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day: and this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day," John vi. 39, 40. Once more, he says to his disciples: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you," ch. xiv. 2. Upon the ground of a clear conviction of his divine authority and character, which he claimed; and a persuasion of the truth of all his declarations and promises, his people have acted as they have done. They have given themselves up to him, and obeyed him. They have been induced to seek principally such things as are now distant and unseen; and not to prefer, but oftentimes to forego the pleasures, possessions and honours of this present world, and every thing desirable therein, in hope of being raised up by him to immortal life and everlasting happiness. So they have acted: so they have believed, and trusted in him: and now his truth is manifest in the event. Those things, which were once the objects of *desire* and hope, are possessed and enjoyed. His faithfulness was believed before, and there was good evidence of the truth of all he said; and they who depended upon it, acted wisely and reasonably: but now it is even seen. Not one jot or tittle of his word has fallen to the ground, but all is fulfilled. Not one of those little ones whom men despised, has perished; whom he had assured, that it was the good pleasure of the Father to give them a kingdom. Not one of those, whom the Father had given him, is wanting, but all his sheep are placed at his right hand.

His truth and faithfulness may be farther illustrated, at that time, by the peculiar degrees of honour and glory conferred upon those, whose virtue has been eminent, and tried by great difficulties and sufferings here. Many indeed, and great are the encouragements, which he gave in the course of his ministry to those who should be eminent, steadfast and constant in virtue; and future rewards will certainly be answerable to those encouraging declarations, and the hopes he has raised by them. "Blessed are ye," says he, "when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil of you, falsely, for my sake: rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven," Matt. v. 11, 12. When the disciples desired to know, who should be "greatest in the kingdom of heaven," ch. xviii. 1, 4. he did not deny that there would be distinctions therein: but intimates, that he who should be most humble, and for the sake of truth and the good of mankind most abase himself, would in the end be most exalted, and be "greatest in the kingdom of heaven." When the two disciples petitioned, "to sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left, in his kingdom," he did not grant their request; assuring them it was not a thing to be determined by him, upon the ground of any personal regards and considerations. Nevertheless he adds: "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father," Matt. xx. 23. and he insinuates to them, that one way of being nearest to him in his glory, is to "drink of his cup, and be baptised with the baptism, with which he was to be baptised;" that is, to suffer in testimony to truth, if called thereto. In figurative expressions he pronounces a special blessing upon men of uniform virtue and obedience. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh shall find watching. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them," Luke xii. 37. When Thomas, upon the ground of an overbearing evidence, admitted the truth of his resurrection, our Lord graciously accepted the profession of faith which he made: but at the same time, he breaks forth into a superior commendation of

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such as should be better disposed to truth. "Jesus saith unto him: Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed," John xx. 29.

Agreeable hereto are many declarations of the apostles. "For," says St. Paul, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. iv. 17. And St. Peter: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. i. 7. that is, they who when tried by difficulties and sufferings in the cause of truth, are not thereby overcome, but still continue faithful, and are only more and more refined and sanctified, shall receive abundance of honour and praise at the appearance of Jesus Christ.

Hereby the Lord will be glorified; when the truth and equity of his judgment shall be manifest in rewards, proportioned to his declarations, and the great hopes he had raised in the minds of the sincere and upright. The cause of virtue is then completely vindicated by him. Every instance of right conduct is recompensed: and the most eminent virtue, which here on earth is sometimes exposed to the greatest difficulties, and the worst reproaches, receives an equal reward. This is glorious to the Judge of the world.

These are perfections of Christ, which are glorified by the perfect holiness, external glory, and great number of his people: for, as the apostle says, "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice in it," 1 Cor. xii. 26. so also is Christ, the head, honoured and glorified in the honour of each saint, much more in the honour and glory of the whole church, which is his body. This is the day, when good men, of all ages and nations, of every rank and condition, of different capacities and attainments, who have lived under the several dispensations of reason and revelation, make up one visible and harmonious assembly. Nor is there any longer one member of the church suffering, or tempted: all have finished their course, and their warfare is accomplished. In the stile of the Revelation, "they are clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands," Rev. vii. 9. the ensigns of victory and triumph.

It is then a day glorious to Christ, and a day of unspeakable joy to his people. He must be honoured and revered by those also, to whom his appearance is not joyful: for all the unjust neglect and contempt of him and his people are for ever confuted and put to shame; and a full conviction is wrought in the minds of all, concerning the reasonableness of the gracious promises formerly made in favour of virtue, and the great rewards now conferred upon it.

It is, moreover, reasonable to suppose, that at this time, Christ will be very glorious in the esteem of the blessed angels, and all orders of intelligent beings: for the angels are said to be "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation," Heb. i. 14. and they "desired to look into those things," 1 Pet. 1. 12. that were done at the publication of the gospel. It may be therefore justly concluded, that they likewise partake in the joy and acclamations of this day; and that in their eyes, as well as in those of his people, Christ is glorified: especially since they are spoken of as present at this time, and coming as attendants on the Judge of the world. See Rev. v. 11—14.

Prop. III. When Christ comes again, he will be admired, particularly, by all them that believe. Three things will appear admirable at that time: Christ's personal glory, the greatness of his love in what he has done for his people, and his goodness in the kind reception he gives them, and the great reward he bestows upon them.

1. Christ's personal glory. He comes on the clouds, with an innumerable company of the heavenly inhabitants in his train: and many awful appearances there will be to increase the grandeur and solemnity of that day. There will be also the glory of his own person, suited to his real dignity, and the great characters he sustains, of the Head of the church and Judge of the world. Once, when he was on earth, in the days of his humiliation, he was gloriously transformed in the view of three of his disciples: "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment became white as the light." The description given of that one transient glorification may help us to some imperfect idea of the present glory of the human nature of Christ in his state of exaltation; and of that in which he will appear, when he comes to judge the world. But though we cannot now distinctly conceive of it, we may be assured it will be such, as will

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raise the wonder of all, and afford every believer a pleasing surprise and joy. Each saint will have a glory of his own, with which he will be satisfied: all will admire, and be delighted with the transcendent glory and majesty of him who is their common Lord and head.

2. Another thing that will be admired at that time is the love of Christ in what he has done for his people, in order to bring them to the glorious and happy circumstances in which they then appear. This was always matter of wonder to those who duly considered it. It will hereafter appear more admirable. It was owing to the doctrine taught by him in a mean condition, and farther confirmed by his painful death and glorious resurrection, that their hearts were won to God and virtue. It was by "looking unto Jesus, who endured the cross, despising the shame, and then sat down on the right hand of the throne of God;" that they "laid aside every weight, and ran with patience the race that was set before them," Heb. xii. 1, 2. If he had not first overcome, neither had they overcome, as they have done, the allurements and terrors of an evil world. His victory encouraged them, and made them conquerors. So it is in the apostle's triumphant challenge: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution——? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us," Rom. viii. 35—37.

3. Another thing, that will be admired by them that believe, is the goodness of Christ in the kind and gracious reception he gives them, and the reward he bestows upon them. This may be argued from the representation, which our Lord himself has given of the solemn procedure at the end of the world: "Then shall the king say unto them on the right hand: come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; a stranger, and ye took me in. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying: Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?" Matt. xxv. 34—37. It will appear amazing goodness in him, to consider, and reward acts of kindness, done to their afflicted and necessitous brethren, as done to himself; especially as they are conscious, that the principle of virtue, from which those good works have proceeded, was formed by his care and institution, and was owing to that love, wherewith he first loved them, in living a life of sorrows, and dying a painful death for their sake.

Thus we have meditated a while upon the several parts of this text. And we perceive, the day of Christ's second coming will be a day of great splendour and magnificence: and shall it not be a day of joy unto us? shall we not partake in the glory and triumphs of that time? This well deserves our consideration. It was a desirable thing, to see the Saviour of the world, when clothed in the sinless infirmities of the human nature: it must be much more desirable, to see him coming in his glory: but neither of these his comings is of advantage unto all. They were his disciples only; and such others, as attentively heard his words, and received them into good and honest hearts, who were entitled to a blessing, as he says to them: "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear," Matt. xiii. 16. So it will be likewise in the time of his second coming. He appears to complete the redemption of those only, whose salvation was begun here, and who were made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the sons of God.

This text leads us to two things, necessary to our seeing Christ with joy; that we be saints, and believers; or, that we have a faith, which purifies the heart, and produces works of righteousness in our lives. So let us be prepared for the coming of the Lord: and let us be diligent, "that we may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless," 2 Pet. iii. 14. Let us be such in the frame of our minds, and in all our actions, at every season, that we may be ready to meet him, whenever he comes. These are they, whom Christ pronounceth blessed, as before shewn. His words at length are these; "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that he will gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants," Luke xii. 37, 38.

May this be our case, as we have reason to believe it was that of our honoured Pastor, whose death we, and many others, now lament! At the same time we ought to be thankful, that he has been so long upheld by his Lord and Master in his service, and particularly, as pastor of this congregation, for the space of forty years and upwards: of which relation to this society,

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and the harmony that had all along reigned therein, he speaks with satisfaction in the preface to his discourses on the principal representations of the Messiah, throughout the Old Testament: 'Recommending them particularly to those of his own charge, to whom he had then stood so 'long related, and with whom he had lived in an uninterrupted peace, and with many marks 'of a distinguishing respect;' which is to your, as well as his honour. He concludes that preface with these words, shewing what was the constant aim of his labours, and what the reward he most desired: 'Such as they are, I make a humble sacrifice of them to the honour 'of the blessed Redeemer, and lay them at his feet: having no higher ambition in this world, 'than to serve his interest, and be accepted of him; nor higher expectation and hope, than to 'be with him, and behold his glory.'

His sermons in the stated course of his ministry were judicious and practical, filled with just sentiments, and texts of scripture aptly applied; composed with great propriety of expression, and exactness of order and method; suited to meaner, as well as better capacities; the fruit of much study, serious thought and consideration. The subjects of his preaching were of a large compass, taking in the general principles of religion, with the grounds and evidences of them, and the important duties of the Christian life, recommended by forcible motives and considerations: not neglecting any of the various wants and exigencies of men, but aiming, by proper and well-chosen arguments, to awaken the secure, quicken the slothful, comfort the afflicted, and strengthen the weak: nor always laying the foundations of religion, but carrying on good beginnings toward perfection. Thus, as a faithful steward and wise overseer, he divided to every one a portion. How he performed some other branches of his pastoral office, many of you must likewise be very sensible, and can bear testimony to the fidelity and tenderness with which he admonished, warned, advised, comforted in private, as the circumstances of things required. His performances at the public ordinations of ministers were always greatly esteemed. In funeral discourses, whether for ministers, or other useful Christians, he had a happy art of giving the best likeness without flattery. His delivery, as you well know, was grave and manly, entirely free from affectation, with very little action, in a word, worthy of himself. As his assistance was much desired in many other places, and his preaching was generally acceptable; I trust there are many, in whom he has been, under God, the instrument of forming a principle of virtue, and of cherishing and improving it by the word of God dispensed by him; who shall be to him, in the great day, a crown of glory and rejoicing. Notwithstanding the exactness of his own compositions, he was a can i . hearer of others; and was a true friend, as well as an excellent pattern to younger ministers, in preaching and in conversation.

In his family he was a watchful guardian, a faithful monitor, an affectionate friend.

He had a great command of his temper and his words. He was scarce ever seen to be angry. He very seldom said any thing to the disadvantage of any one; and was much more apt to commend than find fault.

He was a steady friend. If any, who stood in that relation to him, came into trouble, he did not desert them, but liberally relieved, and affectionately comforted them, and persisted to take care of them under continued distresses and afflictions; though sometimes some such returns were made, as could not be altogether agreeable.

He was happy in the esteem and respect of great numbers of his brethren in the ministry, and many others; men of much reading, sound judgment, unquestioned probity, and eminent in their several spheres and stations. Not now to insist on the regard shewn him by those of the congregation, to which he was more especially related, and in whom he had much comfort: which was mentioned before.

He scarce ever lost any friendship entirely: for being always master of himself, he never irritated by hasty and offensive expressions the displeasure, which any through prejudice might conceive against him: and, as good-will had never ceased, nor enmity taken place, on his part, when opportunities offered; (which were not unlikely to happen, considering his reputation and influence in the world) he cheerfully performed offices of kindness for such persons, or their friends, and thereby laid them under fresh obligations. Thus he overcame evil with good, and regained the love and esteem of those, who for a while had been estranged from him.

He was a sincere friend of religious and civil liberty: and was always of a catholic spirit, loving good Christians of every communion.

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Such were his attainments, that it may be well supposed he was particularly fitted for the conversation of men of rank, and of extensive knowledge: but he could condescend; and in the society of meaner persons he was the same man; as well pleased, and as free and communicative, as in any other; provided he found an inquisitive temper, and some good understanding in the things of religion. In those seasons he appeared very amiable to such as were attentive, and disposed to observe.

The best judges have acknowledged the pieces published by him, which consist of several volumes, and are upon divers subjects and occasions, to be the works of a masterly hand. How constant he was in the public services of his ministerial office in this place, and how frequent elsewhere, are things well known: and when it is considered how laboured and finished all his compositions were; and that, besides, he read much, both in ancient and modern authors; had a numerous acquaintance, and a large epistolary correspondence; and that with care he revised many works of his learned friends, and kindly forwarded some of them to public view, and performed abundance of other good offices in private, and had a concern in many great and useful designs of a more public nature; it may be somewhat difficult to conceive, how he should have sufficient time and strength for what he did: but he was blessed with a most ready apprehension, which fitted him for quick dispatch; and moreover, he loved employment, and could endure long and close application.

But to draw to a conclusion: Dr. Harris may be said to have excelled among good men, on account of the number of virtues possessed by him in a conspicuous degree; and on account of the great uniformity of his temper and conduct in the several occurrences of his life. Among great men, in like manner, he had a distinction, inasmuch as there have been few in whom so many accomplishments have met together and been united. What may serve to confirm this part of the character, however exalted it may appear, is his great reputation in the world, which[a] began very early, and continued to the last; not sought by him, but attending him, as the shadow and concomitant of his merit.

By the greatness of his capacity he was qualified for the high stations in life, and might have shone therein: but it is as glorious to despise great things, as to seek and obtain them. Merit is an intrinsic thing, and depends not upon outward advantages: nor is his at all the less for choosing to serve God, and abiding in the way most agreeable to his own judgment, and endeavouring to be useful among those Christians, who were much of the same mind with himself; to whom he has been an ornament, and will be a lasting honour.

The relation that has subsisted between this excellent person and us, is now dissolved and broken by the stroke of death: and it becomes us to submit our wills to the divine will and pleasure, and to acquiesce in this afflicting and discouraging event. But there are also other duties incumbent on us. It is a direction of the apostle: "Remember them that have had the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God: and considering the end of their conversation," their steadfastness and perseverance, "follow their faith," Heb. xiii. 7. There is honour and respect due to the memory of such: and we ought likewise to imitate their virtues. We should recollect the instructions that have been given us, and continue to follow and obey them. We are to be thankful for the blessing we have enjoyed; and are also to consider, that we have had a talent, of which we must give an account. If we shall be able to give a good account in the end, this will be joyful to those who have been our guides and instructors, and to ourselves. Both they and we shall, then, receive a full reward.

[a] Dr. Harris was for a short time assistant to Mr. Read in Gravel Lane, Southwark. In 1698, the twenty-third year of his age, he was chosen to succeed the very eminent Mr. Timothy Crusoe in the pastoral care of the congregation in Crouched Fryars, London. In 1703, he was entrusted by the executors of Mr. Nathanael Taylor with the publication of the posthumous papers of that celebrated preacher; to which he prefixed a preface, an example of that excellent manner, by which all his writings are distinguished. How great his credit has been of late years, is well known. I add no more. But, for some farther memoirs of Dr. Harris, would refer to the funeral sermon preached by Dr. Grosvenor.

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THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE AN ARGUMENT FOR THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

THREE DISCOURSES

ON ROMANS XI. 11.

I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Rom. xi. 11.

In this context the apostle discourseth of an affecting scene of things, the reception of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews; the former a just occasion of much joy, the latter of like grief and concern: that they, who had been long favoured and distinguished by religious privileges, should fall from them: and, when others received marks of divine favour, and indeed pressed in for a share in spiritual blessings, they should be offended at it.

St. Paul has a long argument upon these points in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of this epistle to the Romans. He enters upon it at the beginning of the ninth chapter in these words: "I say the truth in Christ, and lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow of heart. For I could wish:" I am almost ready to wish. He does not say, that he actually wisheth it. "For I could wish," says he, "that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came:" and it concludes with a pious acknowledgment, and humble adoration of the wisdom and equity of Divine Providence; though these and other events in this world appear to us, for a time, strange and surprising. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!—For of him, and through him, and to him are all things. To whom be glory for ever."

My chief design at this time is to observe some advantages, which Christians have in their argument for the truth of their religion, from the present afflictive circumstances, and low estate of the Jewish people and nation.

"I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall?" As if the apostle had said: 'But 'by this their present rejection, which I have been speaking of, do I intend to say, that they 'have so stumbled, as to fall; that is, so as never to rise again, and never to be again restored 'to prosperous circumstances, as a people?'

Or, according to another interpretation: 'Do I by what I have said intend to intimate, that 'all of them should fall, and none believe, and partake of the blessings of the Messiah's king-'dom, and the divine favour?'

"God forbid:" or, which would be better, and more proper: by no means, or far be it: for the name of God never is in the original phrase, by which this emphatical negative is expressed. 'No, by no means: that is not the case, that none of the natural posterity of Jacob should 'believe, and come into the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom.'

"But through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them unto jealousy." 'But by the Jewish people now generally rejecting the Messiah, it has so happened, that salva-'tion has been conveyed unto the Gentiles: and herein there is not only a benefit to them, in their 'salvation, but also to the Jews: for by the Gentiles embracing the gospel proposed to them, 'and coming to partake of religious privileges, the Jewish people will be provoked to emulation:

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'more of them will now believe, and be accepted of God, than if the gospel had not been 'preached to and received by the Gentiles.

'When therefore I speak, as I have done, concerning the offence taken by the Jews against 'Jesus and his gospel, and concerning the divine displeasure against them upon that account; 'I do not intend to insinuate, that the posterity of Jacob are totally and absolutely excluded: 'or to deny, that such of them, who now, or at any time hereafter, shall believe, will be received 'and approved.'

The sense I have given of this text is confirmed by what the apostle says at the beginning of this chapter, where also, in the course of his argument, he has these like words: "I say then, has God cast away his people? By no means. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin," Rom. xi. 1. 'I reckon myself a proof to the contrary, 'and that God is willing to receive any of his ancient people the Jews, who believe in Jesus, 'and obey the revelation made by him.' Then instancing in the number of true Israelites, servants and worshippers of God in the time of Elijah, no less than seven thousand; though the apostasy was so general, that Elijah thought he was left alone, he adds: "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace," Rom. xi. 5.

Indeed the Jewish people by generally rejecting the gospel of Christ, preached to them with divine authority, had generally excluded themselves from the privileges of God's people, having refused to accept the blessings offered to them. What then should be done? Was the Messiah of God to have no people when the Jews rejected him? It was not fit. Since therefore they now shew great reluctance to that kind proposal, the gospel shall be preached to the Gentiles, who will hear and receive it: and when they have received it, they will be of use to the Jewish people: for they will provoke them to jealousy, and all good men among them will be disposed to receive the Messiah, and from time to time will be brought into his kingdom: till at length, possibly, there shall be a general conversion of them, and that very much owing to the profession of true religion made by Gentiles. So the fall of the Jews has been the Gentiles' salvation: the Jews rejecting the Messiah hastened the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles: and the Gentiles receiving and maintaining the gospel will provoke the Jews to emulation, and excite them to receive it, that they also may partake in the divine favour and the marks of it.

So the apostle argues in this and following verses: "But through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them unto jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" that is, their general conversion, or a more numerous conversion of them, than has yet been. "For I speak unto you, Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles; I magnify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them: for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Rom. xi. 11—15. Again: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceit) that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved," ver. 25, 26. "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy: for God has concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," Rom. xi. 30—32.

There are therefore two things spoken of in these and divers other verses of this chapter: an advantage accruing to the Gentiles through the unbelief and rejection of the Jews: an advantage accruing to the Jews through the belief and reception of the Gentiles.

It is the first point chiefly upon which I shall insist, and in the following method.

I. I shall observe the present state of things with regard to Christians, the followers of Jesus, and the Jews who reject him.

II. I shall shew what advantages Christians have in the argument for the truth of their religion from the present state of things in the world.

III. I intend to mention some remarks and observations upon this subject.

I. In the first place I would observe the present state of things in the world, both with regard to Christians; the followers of Jesus; and the Jews who reject him.

And the case is very obvious, such as every one is able to perceive, upon a little thought and consideration.

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There are now great numbers of men in the world, in various kingdoms, states and governments, in countries near and afar off, professing faith in Jesus as the Christ, who are not the natural descendants of Abraham and the ancient patriarchs.

These people called Christians, of Gentile stock and original, declare themselves worshippers of the one living and true God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God who delivered the law by Moses, and often spake unto the children of Israel by the prophets.

And as they are worshippers of the one true God, they are likewise free from all that kind of idolatry which once prevailed universally in the world, and into which the Jewish people themselves formerly were often seduced and perverted. They worship not, as gods, the sun, or the moon, or the stars: nor Baal, nor Saturn, nor any other of the gods of the people of the East, or of the Egyptians, or of the Greeks and Romans, or of any of the countries of the Barbarians in the northern parts of the world.

Nor are they only worshippers of the one living and true God, the God of the people of Israel, but they also receive the scriptures of the Old Testament, delivered in a succession of ages, at divers times, to the descendants of Abraham and Israel. They believe them to be the writings of men, animated and inspired by the Spirit of God, and have them in equal veneration with the Jewish people themselves.

Moreover they highly respect and honour not only the patriarchs and Moses and the prophets, but likewise all the worthies of the ancient dispensation, who walked with God, and in the main were upright in his sight, and steadfast in his covenant.

These Christian people differ indeed from the Jews in receiving a person as a great and eminent prophet, whom the Jews reject: but yet their regard for that prophet, whom they call the Christ, or the Messiah, is very much owing to their respect for those ancient scriptures in which they think he is foretold and promised.

And though they do not conform to all the ordinances of the law of Moses, they allow and believe his law and his whole institution to have been of divine appointment, wisely designed, and of great use, as the state of things in the world then was. And with cheerfulness and zeal they assert and maintain against all opposers the divine authority of that dispensation. They are likewise sometimes almost compelled to wonder, that the Jewish people of old, who had such a law, should forsake God, and depart from his worship, so often as they did.

And, which is very considerable, they do not make void the law of Moses, but establish it. For their religion strictly requires obedience to all the moral laws of righteousness and true holiness therein delivered, and upon which the greatest stress is there laid: which righteousness is so elegantly and copiously taught and recommended in the books of Job, the Psalms, and the Proverbs: in comparison of which the latter prophets openly declared ritual observances to be of little value, and without it useless and offensive. Insomuch that the substance of the Christian religion is no other, than what has been accounted true religion by Moses and the prophets, by all the righteous men, and wise and pious princes, that ever were.

This is what is inculcated in their religious assemblies, and enforced from the consideration of everlasting rewards and punishments in a future state; more forcible motives, than the hope or fear of temporal rewards and penalties in the present life.

Nor do they neglect to improve the instances of faith and piety recorded in the Old Testament: though more especially they dwell upon the shining example of perfect virtue in the life and death of Jesus, their great Lord and Master.

As hereby men are trained up in great numbers to true and eminent virtue, they cannot but look upon themselves as the true Israel, "who worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in unnecessary, ritual appointments," Phil. iii. 3. And the righteousness, principally required in the law, is better fulfilled by them who have the religion of Jesus, than it was by those who had only the institution of Moses, Rom. viii. 4.

And indeed the religion of Christians is that of Abraham, according to which he was justified, without the peculiarities of the law of Moses: and it is a character which they are pleased with, and boast of, that through Jesus Christ they are become, according to the Spirit, the children of faithful Abraham; and are justified and accepted of God as he was.

Nor ought it to be forgotten, that as the disciples and followers of Jesus do not take upon them the yoke of the ritual ordinances of the law of Moses, as necessary to salvation; so neither

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have they introduced any other like ordinances in their stead. At least they profess, that Jesus, whom they own for the Messiah, has no such ordinances in his religion: excepting two only, both plain and simple; one initiatory to a profession of faith in him, and of obedience to his law; the other commemorative of his love, who freely laid down his life, though spotless and innocent, as a testimony to the truth of that important doctrine, which he had taught and recommended to mankind.

These are the followers of Jesus. These are Christians, who now do, and for a long time have flourished, and been numerous and considerable.

In the next place we are to observe the state of the Jews; the natural posterity of Jacob, who reject Jesus, and do not allow him to be the Messiah, the great prophet and deliverer, foretold and promised in many parts, and in almost every book of the Old Testament.

They also are in great numbers, some in almost every province and kingdom of the known world. They are numerous, but not a people. They have a being, but they dwell not in the land of Canaan, which had been given them for an inheritance. They have no power and authority, no empire, no civil government, scarce[a] a right and privilege to possess the smallest tract or territory of land in any part of the world.

Nor have they any temple: for their stately temple, once glorious in outward appearance, still more glorious for the especial presence of the Divine Majesty, and the frequent manifestations he there made of himself: the temple, I say, where their tribes were to assemble, where alone, according to the law of Moses, sacrifices were to be offered, is in ruins, or rather is no more: without any traces of it remaining, but the remembrance of the place where it once was.

Other tokens of the divine favour are also wanting. They have not the Urim and Thummim of the priesthood, nor any vision, or prophecy, nor voice or word from God to direct or comfort them. Prophecy and vision, in ancient times frequent, or even constant, are now not only rare and uncommon, but altogether unknown among them. Learned Rabbies, and traditionary teachers they may have: but what prophet can they boast of, as theirs, since the time of Jesus; who truly was a Prophet mighty in word and deed, and, as we say, the looked for and promised Messiah, but despised and crucified by them?

Such is the state of things in the world, with regard to Christians, the followers of Jesus; and the Jews, who reject him.

I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Rom. xi. 11.

II. I AM now in the second place, as formerly proposed, to shew what advantages Christians have in the argument for the truth of their religion, from this state of things; and particularly from the afflictive circumstances of the Jewish people, who reject the Lord Jesus, and believe not in him as the promised Messiah.

We know Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour that should come into the world, from the fulfilment of many ancient prophecies in his person and ministry, from the consideration of the perfection and excellence of his doctrine, the unspotted purity and holiness of his life, the proofs he gave of wonderful knowledge and understanding: from his many miraculous works, his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, and from the mighty works done by his apostles, and others, preaching to the Jews and Gentiles, in his name, and under his authority.

Beside all this, we have, as I apprehend, a great advantage in the argument for the truth of our religion, from that state of things which was formerly taken notice of: and I shall now endeavour to shew it under the following particulars.

1. It was foretold by our Lord.

[a] If they have a right to purchase and possess lands of inheritance in some places, I suppose in but a few only, and there by some special favour and indulgence.

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2. It is agreeable to many prophecies in the Old Testament.

3. The present state of the Jewish people affords reason to believe, that the Messiah is already come.

4. The time and circumstances of the present captivity and dispersion of the Jewish people, afford an argument for the truth of the Christian religion.

5. The subsistence of the Jewish people to this time affords an attestation to divers things upon which some evidences of the Christian religion depend.

1. This state of things, with regard both to Jews and Gentiles, was foretold by our Lord: and, as the event has been agreeable to what he said long ago, it shews, that he was a prophet. It also demonstrates the truth and justness of all his claims; not only, that he came from God, but that he was the Christ, as he said.

When the centurion had expressed a remarkable faith in the power of our Lord to heal his sick servant at a distance, "he said to them that followed: I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east, and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. viii. 10—12. See also Luke xiii. 29. How unlikely was this! How little prospect was there at that time, that great numbers of Gentiles in all quarters of the world, should believe in God and his Christ, whom he had sent! But yet that saying of our Lord has been abundantly fulfilled. The truth of his words appeared soon after, and they have been fulfilling to this day.

The reception of the Gentiles, with the dislike and resentment of the Jewish people, is evidently represented in the parable of the prodigal son, who upon his repentance is most kindly received by the father: but the elder son, meaning the Jewish people, the natural posterity of Jacob, is offended, and will not come in, Luke xv.

The rejection of the Jewish people, who had been long barren and unfruitful to a great degree, and were still likely to neglect the best means of improvement, is set before them by our Lord very intelligibly, though with as little offence as might be; which is agreeable to all the rules both of wisdom and goodness. "He spake also this parable," says the evangelist: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard," Luke xiii. 6, 7; that is, in some inclosed spot of ground, where it was well situated and defended. "And he came, and sought fruit and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard: Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none. Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?"

And in like manner in some other parables representing their great and imminent danger of ruin, and also setting forth the justness and fitness of the sentence to be pronounced upon them if they should not repent; if they should still continue unfruitful after enjoying the best means of improvement, and should withal oppose and abuse the messengers of God sent from time to time to warn and reclaim them. "Then began he to speak unto the people this parable: a certain man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.—And at the season he sent a servant unto the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty," Luke xx. 9—16. In like manner did they unto others who were sent unto them. At length the lord of the vineyard sent his son: but him they "cast out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He will come and destroy those husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others," compare Matt. xxi. 33—41.

Our blessed Lord, all whose other miracles were healing and beneficent, with a view to the advantage of that people, if by any means they might be alarmed and persuaded, constrained himself to speak one word of malediction, a sentence of condemnation upon a barren fig tree, and with surprising effect. He was going to Jerusalem: "And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it: Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever: and presently the fig tree withered away," Matt. xxi. 19. A miracle that was emblematical and prophetical, signifying the affecting and speedy ruin and desolation of the Jewish nation, if they out-sinned the day of trial allotted them, and persisted to neglect and abuse the means of salvation afforded them.

We have in our Lord's discourses divers predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities attending it: and the event has shewn the truth of his prophetical character.

It should be also observed by us, that those predictions were publicly spoken in the hearing of many people; not of the disciples only: and they were delivered with such marks of affection

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and tenderness, and contained so distinct and so moving a description of impending calamities, that nothing could have been better suited and adapted to prevent them, than by inducing men to repent: and if they did not repent, he assured them, that "then would be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to that time, no nor ever shall be," Matt. xxiv. 21. And when he was led away to be crucified, "and there followed him a great company of people, and of women, who also bewailed him and lamented him, Jesus turning unto them said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.—For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Luke xxiii. 26—31.

And we plainly perceive by his words, that the desolation, which he foresaw, would be of a long duration, as we also see in the event: which added to his concern for that people. It was not a single judgment, a calamity of one day, though great and terrible, but a long scene of affliction and darkness, which he foretold and bewailed. "And when he was come nigh, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying: If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes," Luke xix. 41, 42. And, "how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings! and ye would not: Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," Matt. xxiii. 37, 38. Once more, "then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it, [meaning the city of Jerusalem,] depart out, and let not them that are in the country enter therein: for these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled—For there shall be great distress in the land, and much wrath upon this people: and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," Luke xxi. 21—24.

The great and punctual accomplishment of these and other words of our Lord, concerning the sad ruin, the wide dispersion, and long captivity of the Jewish people, afford a strong argument for the truth of the Christian religion; and assure us, that Jesus spoke with divine authority, and that the doctrine taught by him, and contained in the New Testament, the writings of his apostles, and their faithful companions, is true and of God.

2. The state of things, formerly observed, is also conformable to ancient prophecies found in the books of Moses and other parts of the Old Testament.

In those books are contained prophecies of the general conversion of the nations of the earth to the acknowledgment and service of the one living and true God, delivered when the worship of God was confined to the one nation of the Jews alone, or to a few men only, their patriarchs and ancestors, and a very small number besides. The way or means, by which this blessing should be conveyed to the world, was also intimated. To Abraham it was declared, that in him, that is, through him and his posterity, all nations, or families of the earth should be blessed: that confines the accomplishment of the promise to his family; some one or more of which must be the author, or authors and instruments of this general blessing. The same promise is solemnly renewed to Jacob. Gen. xxviii. 14. Afterwards there were prophecies delivered, containing limitations and restrictions relating to the tribe of Judah, and the family of David. The descendants of Abraham in general, or many of them, may some way contribute to this design: but the tribe of Judah and the family of David are often spoken of with special regard. In Isaiah particularly, it is foretold: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots—In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek," Isa. xi. 1, 2, 11. Again, "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth," ch. xlix. 6. And it is out of the tribe of Judah, and the family of David, that our Lord arose: and by him, as is manifest, the knowledge of God has been spread over the earth; and the promise made to Abraham, that "in him all the families of the earth should be blessed," has been fulfilled.

But beside this there are intimations given in the Old Testament, that when this event should happen, the Jewish people would be in some circumstances which are disadvantageous.

Observable are the words of our Lord when he foretels the destruction of Jerusalem. "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled," Luke xxi. 22. It is not improbable, that our Lord has here an especial reference to some prophecies in the book of Daniel, relating particularly to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, which he fore-

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saw, and was then speaking of; but he might also have an eye to some other parts of scripture: and we may without much difficulty perceive divers things said in the Old Testament, which are prophetical, not only of the destruction of Jerusalem, but likewise of the long captivity and dispersion which were to ensue.

Jacob foretelling the condition of his posterity in future times, says, "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise. Thy hand shall be upon the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down unto thee," Gen. xlix. 8. The tribe of Judah, as we find from the history of the people of Israel, usually had some distinction among the rest. At length David and his descendants, who were of that tribe, sat upon the throne of government among them: and from Judah the kingdom of the two tribes was called: and indeed from that tribe all Israelites in general were stiled Jews.

It follows in the place just cited: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be," ver. 10. The sense of which prophecy may be briefly taken in this manner: 'The royal 'power and authority, which shall be established in the posterity of Judah, shall not be taken 'from them; or at least they shall not be destitute of rulers and governors; no, not when they 'are in a declining condition, until the coming of the Messiah: but when he is come, there shall 'be no distinction between the Jews and other nations who shall be obedient to the Messiah: 'and after that the posterity of Judah and people of the Jews shall have neither king nor ruler 'of their own, but the commonwealth of Judah shall lose all form of civil government and 'authority.'[a]

This we know to have happened about the time of our Saviour's coming. From David to the Babylonish captivity the tribe held the sceptre for several ages. After seventy years captivity the Jews returned to Judea, or the land of Canaan, where they lived again according to their own laws: their temple was rebuilt, and they sacrificed and worshipped there, for the most part, with great freedom, according to the appointments of the law of Moses. They were a distinct people, and had among them civil government and authority: but at the time of our Lord's birth, and afterwards, they were in some measure subject to the Romans: and the Jewish power and authority declined, till it was quite abolished and overthrown by the emperors Vespasian and Titus, about forty years after our Lord's ascension: and so it has been to this day.

Moses assured the people of Israel: "The Lord thy God will raise thee up a Prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him shall ye hearken," Deut. xviii. 15. And God himself said to Moses: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee: and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him," ver. 18, 19.

Some understand this to be an express prophecy concerning the Messiah himself, that great Prophet who would be in an especial manner like unto Moses. Others have supposed it to be a promise of a constant succession of prophets among them.

Allow this last to be the meaning, it implies a command to hear Jesus, if he were a prophet; and a threatening of punishment, if he were not heard and obeyed: and that Jesus was a prophet, is evident from testimonials surpassing not only those given to other prophets among them, but even to Moses himself. Consequently disobedience to him was a thing for which God would certainly reckon with them.

I shall cite a passage or two more out of later prophets. In Daniel it is said: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgressions, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself. And the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant

[a] See Patrick upon the place.

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with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease: and for the overspreading of abomination he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate," Dan. ix. 24—27.

Here is a promise made to Daniel, that the city of Jerusalem with its temple should be rebuilt: and that they should for some while there worship and serve God, as we know they did after the return from Babylon. And here is a promise of the appearing of the Messiah, and a prediction of great desolation afterwards: which also we know to have happened soon after the time of Jesus, who was a great prophet, and anointed of God in a most extraordinary manner, and was generally rejected by the people to whom Daniel belonged, and to whom he prophesied.

In Malachi, the last of the prophets of the Old Testament, are these words; "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight. Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts: but who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appears? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner of silver," Mal. iii. 1—3. And afterwards: "For behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing under his wings, and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall: and ye shall tread down the wicked, and they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts," Mal. iv. 1—3.

Certainly these are not insignificant words in the mouth of the prophet; and these emphatical expressions do evidently appear to relate to a great person who should come among the Jews whilst their temple was standing: whereas their temple was destroyed, and they were led into captivity soon after the time of Jesus our Lord.

John the Baptist, who well understood these prophecies, and knew his own character, says therefore: "And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I.—Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor. He will gather his wheat into the garner, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire," Matt. iii. 10, 11.

And Simeon, who when he saw the child Jesus at the temple, doubted not but he was the Lord's Christ, and spoke of him as such, and that he was "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel," Luke ii. 32, said to Mary his mother: "This child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel," ver. 34.

The conversion of the Gentiles then, and the low condition of the Jewish people, are not only agreeable to prophecies of the Lord Jesus, but likewise to many ancient prophecies contained in the books of the Old Testament.[a]

3. The present state of the Jewish people, particularly their afflictive circumstances, affords good reason to believe, that Messiah, that great person spoken of in the Old Testament, but still wished for and expected by them, is already come.

For the prophecies concerning him speak of his being of the tribe of Judah, and family of David. He must appear, therefore, whilst the registers of their tribes and families are in being: but now they are lost. If any one should now arise, claiming that great character, it could not be known what tribe he was of, and therefore there could not be any good assurance that his claim was just.

This is an advantage in the argument for the truth of the Christian religion: for we know that Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, and family of David. But since the long captivity and numerous dispersions and removals of the Jewish people from one place to another, oftentimes under the greatest difficulties, it is impossible that their registers should be preserved, or the families of particular persons be known.

Another thing clearly intimated by the latter prophets of the Old Testament, is, that the Messiah should come during the time of the temple built after the return from Babylon. God was pleased, by the prophet Haggai, to encourage the people to go on in rearing up the temple

[a] If any should find this discourse too long for a single reading, here is a proper resting place.

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after this manner: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once more, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth: and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts," Hagg. ii. 4, 5. Again, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of hosts," ver. 9.

That temple wanted some things, which were in the temple built by Solomon; particularly, the symbol of the divine presence, the cloud of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat. By the "greater glory of the latter house" therefore seems to be meant the appearance of the Messiah, who is Emmanuel, or God with us: in whom the Deity dwelt and manifested himself in a peculiar manner: by which means alone, that is, by whose presence alone, this second temple could be rendered more glorious than the former.

The coming of the Messiah to that temple is also promised in Malachi before quoted. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight. Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts," Mal. iii. 1.

Since therefore the temple, where the promised messenger of so great eminence and distinction was to appear, is now no more, but has long since been destroyed, and continues to be in ruins; we are assured, that he is already come: for it is impossible for God to fail, or that he should alter the purpose he has so solemnly pronounced and declared.

Have any of the promises or threatenings delivered by the prophets failed of accomplishment? Did not the posterity of Jacob descend into Egypt, a few in number? And were they not brought thence again, a great host, by mighty power and an outstretched arm, at the time before appointed and promised?

Were not the threatenings with regard to Saul; David, Solomon, accomplished? Were not the threatenings concerning the ten tribes, and the tribe of Judah, fulfilled? Were not the former, the ten tribes, sent into captivity, and scattered, so as to return no more?

And when the kingdom of Judah took not warning by the judgments inflicted upon the kingdom of Israel, the threatened captivity was brought upon them: and the promise of their return from Babylon was also wonderfully and punctually accomplished. They settled again in the land of Israel, they were increased and multiplied, and became once more a great people. The temple, which had been laid waste, was raised up, and its worship restored, according as God had before said by his holy prophets.

Why then should it be thought by any, that the promise concerning the coming of the Messiah to that temple should not be performed? It must have been fulfilled. The desire of all nations did come to that temple, and the nations have received him, and believed on him, and have partaken of his fulness. They have received grace for grace. They have gained through him the knowledge of the one living and true God. He is their God, and they are his people. They worship him in spirit and truth: and the law of Moses, introduced since the Abrahamic covenant, and ordained for a time only, as to all its unnecessary and burdensome appointments, is no longer in force, or of any use unto them.

4. The time and circumstances of the present captivity and dispersion of the Jewish people afford an argument for the truth of the Christian religion: for their afflictions appear to have the marks of divine displeasure against them for rejecting and crucifying Jesus, and for persisting to reject him and his apostles.

Their present afflictions began soon after, and have continued ever since. It was not more than forty years after our Lord's crucifixion, that the people of the Jews underwent the dreadful calamities of the siege of their city: when also it was taken, and their temple consumed, and they slain, or scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

Nor can we avoid observing the estate and condition of this people, the posterity of Abraham, the friend of God; the children of Jacob, whom God preferred to the children of Esau; whom God had chosen to be his people above all the people of the earth: as Moses reminds them in that solemn and pathetic address at the end of the book of Deuteronomy: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance," Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9.

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It is not reasonable to think, that God would carry it unkindly toward them, or stand at a distance from them, without some just ground of offence and provocation.

Moreover, we know, that he promised to bless them abundantly if they hearkened to his prophets, and walked in the ways he prescribed them: declaring at the same time, that if they were disobedient, he would not leave them unpunished, "If ye will walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them," Lev. xxvi. 3. "I will set my tabernacle among you, and my soul shall not abhor you: and I will walk with you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people," ver. 11. But if ye will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you," ver. 23, 24. "And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; then I will walk contrary unto you in fury, and will chastise you yet seven times for your sins," ver. 27. And his treatment of this people in all ages has been agreeable to these, and other like declarations.

Since, therefore, this favourite people, so long called by the name of the Lord, and so distinguished by him, are under tokens of divine displeasure: since they are no longer in the land of Canaan, which had been given to them, and lie under many disadvantages in the places where they live, there must be some ground and reason of it. And a very likely reason offers, when we consider, as before hinted, the time when the present affliction commenced, even soon after the appearing of Jesus in this world.

And we shall be confirmed in the supposition, that this dispersion is owing to their sin in rejecting the Lord Jesus, if we consider farther, when he appeared, and who he was.

He came at the time appointed for the Messiah, when the temple, built after the Babylonish captivity, was in its glory, when the registers of their families were in being, and when the Jews themselves and all nations around them were in expectation of such an eminent person.

And must we not think, that since Jesus answered the character of the promised Messiah, or the Lord's anointed, it must be a great and heinous sin to reject and crucify him? If there be any truth in the evangelical history, (as certainly it is all matter of fact, and but a part only of the great things done by Jesus are there related) he was a most excellent person, and a most eminent prophet. Must not any people, the Jews especially, be accountable for such a privilege? Must not their guilt in rejecting Jesus appear aggravated, when we consider that they crucified him, and repented not: though he rose from the dead, and his apostles continued a good while afterwards preaching among them?

It is also remarkable, that when Jesus was condemned as an impostor and malefactor, they imprecated the guilt of his death upon themselves and their children, Matt. xxvii. 25.

And the long continuance of this affliction is very striking, so far beyond any thing they had before undergone: and yet they are not guilty of idolatry, as in times past: but all false gods, and all images in worship, are an abomination to them.

When Solomon consecrated the temple he had built he prayed: "If thy people sin against thee, and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them captive into the land of the enemy, far or near: if they shall bethink themselves, in the land whither they are carried captives, saying, we have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness: and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them captive, and pray unto thee:"—then "hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee," 1 Kings viii. 46—50.

And long after this Nehemiah, mindful of the measures which God had openly declared he would observe with this people, prays after the same manner: "O Lord God of heaven, that keepest covenant and mercy with them that love thee;—remember, I beseech thee, the word which thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: but if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them: though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of heaven, yet I will gather them from thence, and will bring them to the place that I have chosen to set my name there," Neh. i. 5—9.

Since then they still continue, under many disadvantages, in the dispersion, which began so long ago, it leads us to conclude, that there is some sin they have committed, which they have not repented of, the guilt of which therefore still lies heavy upon them.

St. Chrysostom in one of his homilies to his hearers, the people of Antioch, discoursing upon

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this very topic, the long duration of the Jews' dispersion and captivity, has this thought: If Jesus had been a malefactor and a deceiver, as the Jews pretended, it might have been honourable, and accounted for righteousness to them, that they put him to death. On the contrary, since the crucifixion of Jesus, they have been chastised more severely than when they were guilty of idolatry, and sacrificed their children to Moloch.

In this long dispersion, of so many ages, it is not unlikely that divers attempts have been made by them to return into Canaan, and rebuild their temple; and it is well known that they have formed conspiracies, and made violent attempts to restore their government in the land of Canaan: but they have been always defeated and overthrown.

Designs of another kind may have been entered into. One thing is often mentioned by ancient historians. The Emperor Julian, commonly called the apostate, because after having been educated in the Christian religion, he turned heathen, about three hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem, formed a scheme of rebuilding the temple. Filled with enmity against the people whom he had forsaken, but still desirous to avoid the scandal of open persecution, he tried every method to humble the Christians, and root out their religion. Knowing [b] the aversion of the Jewish people to Christianity, he sent for some of their chief men, and asked them why they did not sacrifice? They answered, because they could sacrifice no where but at the temple at Jerusalem, and now they had none. He bid them take good heart, and engaged to build a temple for them. And [c] accordingly gave full powers and strict orders for that purpose to proper officers allotting likewise large sums out of the public revenue. But when materials were provided, and they were about to lay the foundations of the intended temple, the workmen were terrified, and some of them scorched by frequent and repeated eruptions of fire from the earth: as is related by divers authors, who lived at the time or near it: and particularly by a heathen historian of good credit, and a friend and admirer of Julian. Undoubtedly such a design was formed and defeated.

If they, [d] who lived about three hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem, thought this captivity of the Jewish people long: how much more may we, when it is now, not only three hunderd, but thrice three hundred years, and almost double that number, since the commencement of it.

If they who lived above a thousand years ago observed the long continuance of this dispersion, as exceeding every thing of the like kind that had befallen this people, certainly the continuance of it to this day must appear very extraordinary and affecting.

5. The subsistence of the Jewish people at this time affords an attestation to divers things upon which some evidences of the Christian religion depend.

For hereby all are assured of the antiquity and genuineness of the scriptures of the Old Testament. These are received by them, and read in their synagogues: and they allow, that therein are contained promises of a great and eminent deliverer. None therefore can pretend, that the scriptures, so often appealed to by Christ and his apostles, are forgeries of Christians.

Possibly we are not aware how great an advantage we have, in this respect, from the subsistence of the Jewish people, and their synagogue worship, where the scriptures of the Old Testament are often read.

It is true, the time of Christ's coming seems to have been a time of greater knowledge, and more general commerce, than that of the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egyptian bondage: but a variety of evidence for important facts, such as the coming of Christ, and his teaching among the Jews, is not to be despised, but thankfully accepted. And if the Jewish people had been extinguished soon after the coming of Christ, and the planting of his religion in the world, some things might have been disputed by enemies which are now incontestable. Some might have had the assurance to deny, that ever there was such a people in the world, or that ever a nation existed which conformed to the institutions of Moses: and they might have

[a] Vid. Chrysost. T. 1. p. 652, 653. Ed. Bened.

[b] See Socrat. H. E. l. 3. c. 20. Sozom. l. 5. c. 20. Theodrt. l. 3. c. 20. Chrys. T. 1. p. 580, 646, &c. T. 2. p. 574.

[c] Ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolymam templum, quod post multa et interneciva certamina obsidente Vespasiano posteaque Tito ægre est expugnatum, instaurare sumtibus cogitabat immodicis. Negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiochensi, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro Præfectis. Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciæ rector, metuendi globi flammarum prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis aliquoties operantibus inaccessum. Hocque modo elemento destinatius repellente, cessavit inceptum. Amm. Marcel. l. 23. c. i.

[d] Chrysostom and others.

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formed an argument, which would have affected some persons, little conversant in ancient history. And our case might have resembled that of the Jewish people of old, who were sometimes obliged to labour in the proof, that [a] they were not expelled out of Egypt, but conducted thence under the especial care of a powerful providence and protection.

But here possibly a scruple may arise in the minds of some: and they may say, if the subsistence of the Jewish people be so much to the advantage of the Christian religion, might it not have been as well for them to have continued in the land of Canaan, maintaining the ancient form of their commonwealth, and living in power and splendour, as in some times of old?

I answer, it was not fit.

1.) For their rejecting the Messiah must require some tokens of divine resentment and displeasure. If Jesus wrought such miracles as are recorded in the gospels, and was crucified by the Jews: and if his apostles preached in his name, and were abused, as the history of the New Testament relates: it was highly proper, that after waiting to be gracious, God should send remarkable judgments upon them, if they repented not; which they did not, but went on increasing in wickedness, as we are assured by Josephus, and other historians.

2.) It was by no means fit that the ancient power of the Jews should be continued to them, considering their rejection of Jesus, and their enmity to them that believed in him. The opposition they would have made to the followers of Jesus, the sufferings they would have brought upon them, would have been insupportable by human nature. By the severest persecution within their own territories, and by solemn and powerful embassies into foreign parts, disparaging the disciples of Jesus and their principles, they would have extirpated them as soon as they were risen up. We may clearly collect as much from the afflictions and sufferings they actually brought upon the apostles and other disciples of Jesus; though their authority and influence were greatly restrained by the superior power of the Roman empire.

3.) *If* the Jewish nation had continued to subsist in their former power and splendour, some evidences of the truth of the Christian religion had not been so cogent as they are: for now the temple, built after the return from Babylon, where the promised Messiah was to appear, is in ruins: therefore he is already come. The Jewish tribes and families are confounded, and it is impossible any Messiah should arise now, who can be known to be of the tribe of Judah and the family of David. In a word, if the Jewish commonwealth and temple still subsisted, all the preceding arguments, taken from their afflictive circumstances, would be weakened: but that is neither for their, nor our benefit. That it is not for ours is manifest; nor is it for theirs: for it is conducive to their best interest, that the evidences of Christianity should be strong and affecting; that they may be provoked to jealousy, and all Israel may be saved; that is, that the prejudices, which they are so apt to indulge may be weakened and removed; and that all who can be persuaded, may be disposed to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus, and receive him as the Messiah.

I say then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid. But rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.—Rom. xi. 11.

III. Before I conclude this argument I choose to mention a few remarks and observations, which I hope may be of some use.

1. The argument afforded us for the truth of our religion from the subsistence and afflictive circumstances of the Jewish people was not absolutely necessary; but yet it was expedient, and is very useful.

It was not absolutely necessary: for though the Jewish nation had been long ago extinct; that is, though they had not now been a distinct people, but had been lost and mingled with other nations, so that no remains of them had been now observable, following any of the ordinances of the law of Moses; yet we should have had sufficient evidence of the truth of the

[a] See Josephus at the end of his first book against Appion, and compare Tacitus, Hist. book V. near the beginning.

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Christian religion, or that Jesus is the Christ, and his doctrine from heaven. This we could have been assured of from our Lord's character, the excellence of his principles, his miracles, his resurrection, and other particulars, well known, and formerly mentioned.

But yet this argument, from the being and afflictive circumstances of the Jewish people, was expedient, and is very useful; as abundantly appears from the considerations which have been insisted on in the discourses upon this subject.

2. We may likewise observe, that some evidences of the truth of the Christian religion are not weakened, but do rather gain force by length of time.

A history of facts may be thought to lose some degree of credibility in a long tract of time: and therefore it might be feared, that the evangelical history might some time suffer upon that account: but indeed it is so circumstanced, and has in it so many internal characters of truth, and is so supported by external testimonies of various kinds, that its credit must remain to the latest ages inviolable.

However it is sufficient that this kind of evidence remains as it is; but then some other evidence advances and gains strength by time.

Christ assured Peter that he would build his church upon a rock, and "that the gates of hell should not prevail against it," Matt. xvi. 18. The longer Christianity has a being in the world, the fulfilment of that promise is the more remarkable, and the foreknowledge of Christ the more conspicuous; especially considering what oppositions of various kinds, in all ages, are made against this doctrine; some by force, and some by art and sophistry: and considering likewise the weakness and inconstancy of mankind, and that some, who in name are friends, weaken the interest they profess to uphold.

When a certain woman, not long before our Lord's removal out of this world, opened a very precious vessel of ointment, and poured it upon his head, some had indignation, and seemed to think it too great and expensive a mark of respect: but he answered them: "Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also that which this woman has done be told for a memorial of her," Matt. xxvi. 6—13. And every time this portion of scripture is read, especially in late ages, it establishes the belief of our Lord's great character.

Jesus often spoke of many coming "from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. viii. 11; that is, to [a] partake of the privileges of the gospel, and the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. So long therefore as there are Gentiles in the world, who thankfully embrace the gospel, this declaration is fulfilled. And the longer it is since these words were spoken, the more are they verified. And every accession to the church of Christ from among ignorant and darkened Gentiles is a fresh confirmation of the truth of his doctrine.

The dispersion of the Jews, the longer it lasts, still more and more does it strengthen the evidences of the Christian religion; it is the more remarkable: it is a plainer and a more affecting token of divine displeasure against them. The greater assurance does it afford that the Messiah is already come: and the more impossible is it rendered for any man to prove himself of the tribe of Judah, and the family of David, whence the Messiah was to arise. For these reasons their present dispersion is prolonged, and may be duly attended to by all to whom the consideration of it may be of use!

3. These things ought also to be considered as warnings to us.

Paul, the apostle more especially of the Gentiles, fails not to make this use of the argument he is upon: "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive, wast grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches: but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then: the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed, lest he spare not thee," Rom. xi. 17—23.

In the subject we have been treating of there is not only an argument for the truth of our religion, but likewise an admonition to us to take heed to ourselves: for from us too the glory may depart, if we improve not our privileges. The seven churches of Asia, in the Reve-

[a] See Whitby upon Matt. viii. 11, 12.

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lation, were warned, and most of them threatened with the removal of their candlestick; unless they speedily repented, and did the first works. Many Christian churches, planted by apostles of Jesus, and watered by their fellow-labourers, have fallen to decay and ruin. The name and title of Christian will not save particular persons in the day of judgment. Nor will the name of Jesus, or Christian alone, secure churches and societies in this world. There should be not only the leaves of a fair profession, but also fruits of love and peace, and all the branches of righteousness and true holiness. Christians should have heavenly minds, and their lives should be adorned with acts of meekness, patience, self-denial, and zeal for each other's welfare. With such Christ will dwell. They honour him, and he will honour them with a distinguished care and protection.

4. From this argument we may be able to form some judgment concerning the general conversion of the Jews. It is not a likely thing: if ever it is to be, there does not appear good reason to think it nigh.

It is not a likely [a] thing, considering that their prejudices are still very great and strong, and have been so all along from the beginning; notwithstanding the great care of the apostles of Jesus, and other zealous preachers of the gospel, to remove them.

If ever there is to be a general conversion of the Jews, there is no good reason to think it near at hand. The advantages afforded to believers in Jesus as the Christ, from the dispersion and afflictive circumstances of the Jewish people, in their argument for the truth of their religion, lead us to this apprehension. So long as there remain great numbers of Gentile people unconverted to the faith of Jesus, who are strangers to God, and his Christ: so long as there is, and is likely to be, a strenuous opposition made by many, several ways, against the Christian doctrine: so long, it is likely, the Jews will remain, and continue to be a distinct people, scattered abroad upon the face of the earth: forasmuch as their subsistence in that manner tends mightily to awaken men, and to confirm and strengthen divers arguments for the truth of the Christian religion.

Nor is there any injustice done them herein: as they at first generally rejected Jesus, they were justly rejected and cast off as a people: but still by the faith and reception of the Gentiles, they are called upon and excited to believe in Jesus: and whenever any of them are awakened, convinced, and converted, they shall be accepted.

St. Paul's argument in this context leads us into this way of thinking: "Have they stumbled, that they should fall? By no means. But rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."

And his words at the twenty-fifth verse of the chapter may be reckoned strong to this purpose: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceit: that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in:" that is, as an admired expositor paraphraseth the verse: 'For [b] to 'prevent your being conceited of yourselves, my brethren, let me make known unto you what 'has been yet undiscovered to the world; that the blindness, which has fallen upon a part of 'Israel, shall remain upon them but till the time come, wherein the whole Gentile world shall 'enter into the church, and make profession of Christianity.'

This may be the thing intended by our Lord, when he says: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," Luke xxi. 24.

As for St. Paul's words at the twenty-sixth verse, they are understood by some in this manner: "And so all Israel shall be saved:" 'And [c] so all Israel shall be converted to the 'Christian faith, and the whole nation become the children of God:' that is, when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in.

But I rather think the meaning to be: 'In this way, according to this method of Divine 'Providence, all [d] good and well-disposed men, both Jews and Gentiles, will be saved; that is, 'will be brought into the way of salvation, taught by the gospel; or will embrace the means of 'salvation proposed therein; the Jews being all along provoked to emulation by the Gentiles, 'and the Gentiles being confirmed in their faith by the circumstances of the Jewish people.'

[a] See Lightfoot's Works, vol. I. p. 375, 376.
[b] Locke upon the place.
[c] Locke as before.
[d] Παυλα δε Ισραηλ καλει τους πιστευοντας, ειτε εξ ιουδαιων ειεν, την φυσικην συγγενειαν προς τον Ισραηλ εχοντες, ειτε εξ εθνων, κατα την της πιστεως ευγενειαν αυτω συναπτομενοι. Theodoret in loc. T. 3. p. 91. D.

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However this seems evident, that as in past ages the Jews had been of great service in upholding religion in the world, and from them at length it was brought to the Gentiles; so, if in the end the Jews are converted to the faith of Christ, it will be through the Gentiles: and probably, upon some more general conversion of them than has yet been. So says St. Paul: "For as ye," Gentiles, "in time past have not believed in God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy," Rom. xi. 30, 31.

And possibly we may now perceive, that some notions concerning the conversion of the Jews are false and groundless, or at best doubtful and uncertain. For some imagine, that upon their general conversion to the Christian faith, they will be established again in the land of Judea, and that Jerusalem, with its temple, will be rebuilt with great splendour and magnificence.

But [a] that supposition is liable to many difficulties and objections. Should their ancient polity be restored, and they be a distinct people in the land of Israel, separate from all the other people of the earth? The [b] gospel revelation does not encourage such a state of things: and therefore it is not reasonable to expect it should be brought in by extraordinary interpositions of Providence, under the dispensation of the Messiah.

Should they sacrifice again, as in times past? The law of Moses is no longer in force, and the sacrifices appointed therein are below the dignity of the gospel institution.

Moreover our Lord plainly declared, that all distinctions of places should cease under the gospel: and that worship would no longer be peculiarly acceptable at Jerusalem, or any other city.

The continued subsistence of a large body of the Jewish people in several parts of the world, and the present desolation of their country, or the small number of inhabitants therein, are thought by some to amount to a strong argument that they shall themselves return thither, and take possession of it again. But from what has been now said it appears that the fore-mentioned state of things answers very valuable ends and purposes: though the Jewish people should never be reinstated in their ancient inheritance.

It is likely therefore, that whenever there is a general conversion of the Jews to the faith of Jesus, they will become Christians indeed, and their fondness for the rites of the Mosaic law will cease: that they and the Gentiles may become one people, and one sheepfold under Christ, the universal Lord of the church, the Saviour, and the Bishop of souls.

Such an event we have good reason to wish and pray for, that the fulness of the Gentiles may be brought in, and that then the blindness, which in part has long happened to the Jewish people, may be entirely removed.

In the mean time we should both labour for the conversion of ignorant Gentiles, and do what lies in our power to provoke the people of the Jews to jealousy by the simplicity of our worship, the purity of our faith, and the goodness of our lives.[c]

5. We must be hence induced to admire the exceeding riches of the wisdom and goodness of God, who has graciously afforded mankind in all ages, helps for knowing the great truths of religion.

God ever spoke to all in the voice of reason. When that was not duly attended to, and the

[a] See the sentiments of Origen and Chrysostom, and others, in Grotius upon Luke xxi. 24. And see Lightfoot's Works, vol. I. p. 375—377. and p. 737, 738. What was Eusebius's sentiment upon this point, may be seen in his Commentaries upon the Psalms, not published till since the time of Grotius. Διδασκονται ευχεσθαι τυχειν της απο των εθνων συναγωγης, ιν' ηδη ποτε της διασπορας απαλλαγεντες επι το αυτο συναχθωσιν· οπερ ιουδαιοι μεν φανταζονται μελλειν εσεσθαι εν τῳ παροντι βιῳ, επιςαντος αυτοις του ηλειμμενου. ημεις δε κ. λ. Euseb. in Psalm 105. al. 106. ver. 47, 48, p. 690. edit. Montf.

[b] 'Not that Jerusalem should be built again, when the 'fulness of the Gentiles is come in, which the Jews conceit: 'nor that then the Jews should be unblindfolded, and become 'a gospel-church, as the Gentiles had been. For what a 'strange world does such a supposal imagine? And how 'often does the gospel gainsay such distinctiveness and peculiarity?' Lightfoot, vol. I. p. 377. The same author says, 'That the calling of the Jews shall be in the places of their 'residence among Christians; and that their calling shall not 'cause them to change place, but condition.' p. 738.

[c] I have not denied that there will be a general conversion of the Jewish people. Nor would I be understood to be positive, that they shall never return to the land of Canaan: though I have mentioned some difficulties attending the supposition. And if indeed they are some time not only to be converted, but also restored; I am persuaded that their restoration will be accomplished in a manner becoming the divine majesty, and that all people will rejoice therein. I am moreover of opinion, that if ever this be brought about, their worship thenceforward will be entirely spiritual and evangelical.

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danger of universal ignorance became great, he separated a family, that of Abraham, from the rest of the world: and of a part of it he made a great nation, to whom he gave a law: who thereby were set up as a lamp upon a hill, to lighten the world around them: and among them, by frequent interpositions of his wise and powerful providence, religion was maintained, and they were kept a distinct nation, enjoying many privileges, until the Messiah came, and religion was spread far and wide in the nations of the earth, according to promises made long before. And then, the Jews generally rejecting that blessing, God cast them off from being his people, as they had been, and poured down upon them tokens of his displeasure: yet not destroying them utterly, and making use of them, even under afflictions, to support the truth of his Son's mission and authority, whom they had crucified.

Nor is there herein any injustice or unkindness, as has been often observed in these discourses: for still they are provoked to jealousy by those who are taken in their room: and in this respect they now enjoy an advantage, with regard to religion, beyond what the Gentiles had formerly. For then it was the nation of the Jews only to whom God was known, and many of the nations of the earth was remote from them. But the unbelieving Jews for the most part live among, or near the followers of Jesus, and have better opportunities to inform themselves of the principles of their religion, than the Gentiles had of old to know that of the Israelites.

And the wisdom of Divine Providence in the former and latter dispensation is admirable, though above our full comprehension: as the apostle observes at the end of this chapter, addressing himself to Gentile Christians: "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they may obtain mercy: for God has concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? or who has given unto him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. To whom be glory for ever."

6. We may hence conclude, that "known unto God are all his works from the beginning." Acts xv. 18. It is an observation of St. James at the council of Jerusalem.

We may infer from the event that God foresaw from the beginning the general apostacy of mankind. And when he called Abraham, and separated him to himself from the rest of the world, he foresaw all the consequences of that gracious purpose and choice; that religion would be in some measure upheld in the world till the Messiah came: and that when he was come, after the space of many ages from the time of the first promise concerning him, the various ordinances of positive appointment, delivered to the Jews by Moses, which had been of use to preserve them in the land of Judea from mixing with their idolatrous neighbours, till he came, would likewise serve to keep them a separate people, wherever they lived, for a long succession of ages, to bear testimony to his ancient covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and themselves: whilst still they would have opportunities of knowing the religion of the Messiah, and whenever their hearts should be touched, they might be again received, and partake in all the blessings of his kingdom.

7. It may be reasonably supposed, that it will be delightful in the heavenly state to know and observe the various methods of Divine Providence, relating to his creatures, in the world where we have lived: particularly to observe the manifold designs of wisdom and goodness with regard to the concerns of religion.

A wise and discerning person has now great delight and profitable entertainment in reviewing these works of Divine Providence, as recorded in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament: but the discoveries in a future state may be much more full and complete, and consequently more delightful. We may then see the overspreading deluge of ignorance in some places and ages; the wonderful steps by which light was restored, and all the virtue of the instruments raised up by God, and employed by him; the faithful and disinterested zeal with which they served God, and promoted the welfare of their fellow-creatures; and how even afflictive events subserved beneficial designs.

But this review of things will not be pleasing and comfortable, except in a state of ease and happiness: for supposing any such extensive knowledge in regions of despair and misery, it could not alleviate, but must aggravate the distress. It would not be satisfaction, but vexation

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for any one, finally and justly rejected of God, to look back on the long space and numerous periods of time, and observe the kind provisions made by the Divine Being for the illumination and salvation of men. For such an one, I say, to survey the scenes of Divine Providence, in several ages, and observe the time and place where he was fixed, having many advantages afforded him, and more in his power; but all abused, or neglected; whilst some others, less privileged, acted discreetly, honoured God, and laid the foundation of future happiness: to such an one this knowledge would be tormenting and vexatious.

But though such extensive knowledge should not be the portion of those who are finally separated from God, there will be remembrance of things past; what men have done, or neglected to do, what means of knowledge were afforded them in this world, what convictions they had of duty, what helps they enjoyed in securing a virtuous conduct, and strengthening them against temptations; and how they failed to improve those many advantages.

How piercing must it be in the place of torment for a descendant of Abraham, who lived in the time of our Lord, to recollect the gracious words he heard from his mouth: that though Jesus taught in the streets of his city, and in the most winning manner promised everlasting life to such as believed in him, and obeyed him: and though he performed numerous miracles, healing and beneficial, suited to the goodness of his doctrine, and tokens of inexpressible mildness and benevolence: yet he despised and abused this amiable person! And though he knew the prophets had spoken of a great deliverer to arise among them; and it was the prevailing opinion that was the very time prefixed for his coming; he would not hearken to him, nor regard him, because of some groundless prejudices, and too strong an affection for worldly possessions and enjoyments.

In like manner, for certain, to others also the recollection of religious privileges, not improved, will be matter of torment and vexation.

Children of pious parents, who "set at nought all their counsel, and will none of their reproof!" Prov. i. 25. 30.

Servants, who are averse to the order and restraint of religious families, and offended at daily devotions, and frequent readings of the scriptures, or books of piety; and choose the habitations of the wicked, where there is not so much as a form of godliness, or an appearance of religion; and prefer the company and manners of the dissolute, who are a reproach to human nature!

A Christian, partaking in all the ordinances of the gospel, yet acting contrary to the obligations he is under!

A minister in God's house, shewing to others the way of salvation, but not walking in it himself!

How grievous must the recollection of such advantages be hereafter, if finally abused and disregarded! No consolation can be given to men then. The sad reflection on their own folly will be unavoidable and incurable.

May we therefore be wise to know and mind the things of our peace now, in this our day. Let us secure time for serious reflections on our conduct and our advantages: let us compare our light and knowledge with our actions and purposes: for between these there ought to be an agreement: where much is given, much may be expected: "And the servant, who knew his Lord's will, and did it not, will be beaten with many stripes." Luke xii. 47.

These are certain truths: and these things will some time afford a pleasing and comfortable, or an afflicting and sorrowful recollection and remembrance. It is an awful and awakening observation of our Lord: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world: and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." John iii. 19. If any of us should perish, have we not reason to dread this aggravated condemnation? For we must be sensible we have had sufficient instruction to assure us, that things above are preferable to things on this earth: and that nothing ought so to divert or engage us, as to prevent our laying up to ourselves treasures in heaven, Col. iii. 2, and that we ought so to order all our present concerns, and the whole of our conversation, as may best promote our most important interest, the everlasting salvation and happiness of our souls.

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A SERMON

PREACHED AT PINNERS-HALL,

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF THE LATE

LEARNED AND REVEREND JEREMIAH HUNT, D. D.

Who departed this Life Sept. 5, 1744, in the Sixty-seventh Year of his Age.

WITH BRIEF MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. John xiv. 2.

Our blessed Lord, who had the human nature, with its sinless infirmities, was tender and compassionate; and being very sensible of the vast disappointment, which his death, especially in the manner it should happen, would be to his disciples, and the great concern it would occasion in their minds, upon many accounts, not only forewarns them of it, but suggests to them likewise the best grounds of support and consolation, that they might not be quite overwhelmed with grief in that dark and discouraging season.

The arguments he proposed to them are fitted to be of signal use to his disciples and followers throughout all ages, in the time of afflictive and melancholy events.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God: believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you."

In which last words two things are observable: first, a comfortable assurance and declaration: secondly, an argument, or consideration, by which the truth and certainty of that declaration is impressed on their minds. Let us meditate a while upon each of these points, and then apply the whole in some reflections.

I. Here is a comfortable assurance and declaration: "In my Father's house are many mansions."

By house may be meant the universe, which is the workmanship or building of God. Our Lord will then be understood to say, that there is another world: there are other abodes, or mansions, beside those on this earth: and when I remove hence, and am seen here no more, I shall still exist: and when you, or other good men die, there is not a period and final end to your or their existence and enjoyments. There are other, and very comfortable, yea better and more durable mansions, than those on this earth. Very agreeably to this sense and interpretation St. Paul says to the Ephesians: "I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," Eph. iii. 14, 15.

But interpreters have generally understood the word house here, in a more restrained sense, of heaven: where our Lord was going, whither he would shortly ascend after his death and resurrection. As the temple was esteemed by the Jews God's house, and our Lord himself speaks of it as his "Father's house," John ii. 16; and Jerusalem is called by him "the city of the great King," Matt. v. 35, on account of the special presence, and the extraordinary manifestations of the Divine Being in the temple there; so heaven may be fitly spoken of in the character of God's house, there being the brightest appearance of his presence, and the fullest manifestation of his glory: though by the perfection of his nature, God, the infinite mind, is every where, and is confined to no particular place whatever: as Solomon acknowledged in his prayer at the dedication of the magnificent temple at Jerusalem: "Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee," 1 Kings viii. 27. "How much less this house, which I have built?" 2 Chron. vi. 18.

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When our Lord says, "in my Father's house are many mansions," he may intend to declare, as some have supposed, that in heaven are many abodes for good men, and [a] different degrees of happiness and glory, in proportion to the advances which they make in this state, and to the services they perform for the honour of God, and the good of their fellow-creatures.

Or, in heaven there is room for you, and me, and all good men of the several ages of the world, and dispensations of Divine Providence.

'There [b] seems to be an allusion to the manner of travelling and providing entertainment in 'the eastern countries; where they had not such inns as we have, but large houses, or caravan-'saries, where were many mansions, in which they might lie on carpets, or couches, and pro-'vide and prepare their own victuals. When a number of persons travelled, there was a præ-'cursor, one [c] of their own company, who "went before to prepare a place for them, and then 'came back again, and received them," or [d] conducted them to the mansions he had prepared 'for them.'

Our Lord then may be understood to say to his disciples: 'You need not be so excessively 'grieved and concerned, as you appear to be, on account of my departure from you, and the dif-'ficulties you may afterwards meet with. For it is a certain truth, that in my Father's house are 'many mansions, and plentiful accommodations. And though I leave you for the present, you 'will throughout your whole life have protection and needful supplies in all dangers and diffi-'culties. I go before you now: but you shall follow me hereafter, and may be assured of a kind 'reception into the mansions I prepare for you.'

"If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." And, after his resurrection: "I ascend to my Father and your Father: and to my God, and your God." John xx. 17.

That is the first thing in the words.

II. The other thing observable is an argument or consideration, by which the truth and certainty of that declaration is impressed upon them.

The argument is friendly and familiar, suited to persons who are treated with intimacy, as the disciples had been by our Lord, and were not unacquainted with the doctrine he had taught; but knew, that this point, of another life, and recompenses therein, had been much insisted on by him. Though therefore the argument be familiar, it is very forcible, and must have come with great weight upon their minds.

"If it were not so, I would have told you." The sum of this argument is: 'I [e] would not de-'ceive you. If you take me for a person of sincerity, as certainly you must, you will rely upon 'the truth of what I say concerning this matter.'

The argument seems to comprise in it these several thoughts and considerations; most of which might arise in the disciples minds, and do now readily present themselves to us.

1. 'You know, that I have professed to act with divine authority, and that I have in the 'most solemn manner promised everlasting life and happiness to them that believe in me, and 'obey my precepts. You must therefore rely upon the truth of this declaration, and the doc-'trine I now remind you of, and should take the comfort of it. If you would not cast upon 'me the reflection of being a deceiver, you must receive this proposition, as most true and 'certain.'

You have often heard me speak to this purpose: "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will, that of all which he has given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day," John vi. 39, 40.

[a] Multitudinem autem locorum non male veteres intelligunt cum graduum differentiis, &c. Grot. in loc.

[b] That is an observation of Dr. Hunt himself, who often had in his mouth the words of the text and context.

[c] Similitudo sumta ab uno comitum, qui in itinere prægressus ad diversorium ibi ceteris cubicula assignat, et efficit, ut venientibus parata sint. Grot. ib.

[d] Continuatur similitudo. Nam solent qui primi in diversorium venerunt ceteris jam adventantibus obviam procedere, et eos introducere, &c. Grot. in v. 3.

[e] Si locus non esset vobis, aperte hoc dixissem vobis, ut mos meus est: ademissem vobis spem inanem. Grot. in loc.

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Moreover you have received and owned me as a teacher come from God, yea as the Christ, and "having the words of eternal life," John vi. 68, 69.

After this you cannot but be persuaded, that I am true and sincere: I must know what is the truth: it is impossible I should be ignorant, whether there is another life after this, or not: and you cannot but think, that what I have said is agreeable to the truth of things.

So John Baptist said in his last testimony to Jesus: "And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifies. He that receiveth his testimony hath set to his seal, that God is true," John iii. 32.

2. 'Consider, how upon the ground of the expectation of recompenses in a future state, I 'have taught and required men, in the whole of their life here, not to seek principally the things 'of this present world, but of another.'

I have taught men, in all acts of worship performed to God, and of goodness to one another, not to aim at present and earthly, but future and heavenly recompenses. And I have directed them not to "lay up to themselves treasures on earth," liable to wasting and corruption: but rather "to lay up to themselves treasures in heaven," which are secure above all accidents; "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal," Matt. vi. 19, 20. I have also directed you "not to do your alms to be seen of men," but as privately as possible, that "your Father, which seeth in secret, may reward you openly," in the day of judgment and general retribution, Matt. vi. 1—4.

Yea I have not only taught moderation of affection for worldly riches and reputation; but I have also encouraged men to endure neglect, contempt, reproach, pain, and all kinds of sufferings in the way of truth and righteousness, if need be, with assurances of a reward that shall be exceeding great. I have pronounced them blessed who suffer upon that account, saying, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil of you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven," Matt. v. 10, 11.

Certainly I, who have continually taught you and others in this manner, must be sincere in what I declare, and be fully persuaded that there is another world, where all good and righteous men, persevering to the end, shall be very happy, and be gloriously rewarded.

3. Consider farther, 'the precepts delivered by me are such, that obedience to them cannot 'have its reward in the present world, but in another only.'

I have declared them blessed who are "pure in heart," Matt. v. 6, and have recommended undissembled, unaffected humility and condescension. I have prescribed the regulation of thoughts and affections, as well as outward actions: and have directed men to pray to God in secret, and to do other good works out of the notice and observation of men: all which virtue and goodness can have a reward in another, and yet invisible world only. A truly virtuous and excellent disposition of mind will, as there is an opportunity, produce a laudable behaviour: but it is not in the power of men to reward all good conduct, supposing they were well disposed to it. Much less can men reward secret piety, or the virtue of the mind, which is known to God only. Nor does God always interpose for the security, prosperity and honour of his most faithful servants; but permits virtue to undergo, for the present, the severest trials: and many will be persecuted for righteousness' sake.

As the precepts delivered by me are of this kind, I must know, that there is another state, where they who do the things I say, shall receive a full reward.

4. 'Consider the methods and arguments which I have made use of to induce men to believe me, and become my disciples.'

Have I therein shewn any improper regard to my own honour and interest in this world? Have I made use of any specious and artful methods to increase the number of my followers? Have I invited any into my service by promises or intimations of worldly ease and grandeur? Have you at any time observed me to encourage the hopes of any advantages, but such as flow from true religion, real virtue and righteousness, and from the favour, approbation and blessing of God in this world, and another? Have I not often, and openly declared: "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me?" Matt. x. 38. And, "Whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple?" Luke xiv. 33. When some have expressed a ready disposition to bear me company, and join themselves to my

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train, have I not immediately told them, without reserve or disguise, how slight the accommodations are with which I am provided? and that the Son of man has not here one quiet and settled habitation of his own? When the rich man, who was also a ruler, came to me, saying, "Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" Luke xviii. 18, did I pitch upon some easy precept, the better to bring in such an one, either for my own, or your present advantage? did I not remind him of the commandments of God? And when he answered, that he had kept them, did I not say unto him: "Go, and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me?" Whereupon he went away sorrowful.

This my plainness and openness in treating men, may fully satisfy you of my integrity, and that I act sincerely, when I assure you, that there is another world beside the present.

5. Recollect, 'what has been my behaviour toward persons of influence and authority in the world.'

Have you observed me to seek my own, or your honour and interest, by gratifying and pleasing men in power? No, you know very well, that I have openly denounced the displeasure of God against the scribes and pharisees, upon account of their doctrine and conduct, derogatory to the honour of God, and the interest of religion. Insomuch that even the worst, and most inveterate of my enemies have afforded me the character of an impartial teacher of truth, without undue respects to the persons of any men, Matt. xxii. 16.

6. 'Especially you may perceive by my behaviour toward yourselves, whether I am sincere, 'and may be relied upon, in what I now say.'

When I called you to attend me, I did not invite and draw you by worldly offers. You are sensible, that when you obeyed my call, "you left all and followed me," Matt. xix. 27; Mark x. 28.

The doctrine of the cross, the practice of self-denial, I have inculcated upon all, especially upon you. I have indeed declared to you, that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," Luke x. 7; and that in discharging your office you will meet with kind and courteous entertainment from worthy persons. But I have as plainly told you, that many others will treat you with a spirit of the bitterest enmity and displeasure: that they "will persecute you from city to city," and that "you will be brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake:" directing you however "to possess your souls in patience," Luke xxi. 19, and assuring you, that "he who endureth to the end shall be saved," Matt. x. 22.

I have likewise intimated to you, that you cannot expect better treatment than I have had, if you keep close to my doctrine and example, as you ought: for "the disciple is not above his master: nor the servant above his lord," Matt. x. 28. "And because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world," many therein, "will hate you," John xv. 19.

You must likewise be sensible, that as I have with much care and tenderness cherished and encouraged every good principle; so I have also freely warned and admonished you, as there has been occasion.

I have plainly told you, that you are happy, and my disciples indeed, if you do the things that I have commanded: and that not calling me Lord, Lord; nor even working miracles in my name, but only doing "the will of my Father which is in heaven," will entitle you to the rewards of the kingdom which I have so often spoken of: and that all others will be rejected by me at the last, though they had been familiar friends and acquaintance, "and had eaten and drunk in my presence," Luke xiii. 26.

Whatever has been amiss in you I have reproved and condemned, even the weakness of your faith, and the slowness of your understandings, owing to prevailing prejudices: and especially all faulty conduct, proceeding from a worldly frame and too strong affection for earthly things.

When I spake to you of my future sufferings, and thereupon Peter, who before had made a very agreeable confession of my being the Christ, the Son of God, began to remonstrate, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee," Matt. xvi. 22, did I not turn me about, and, in the presence of you all, say unto him: "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence to me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men?" ver. 23.

And when you had a strife one with another, who should be the greatest in the kingdom of the Messiah: supposing it to have in it places of honour and preferment, such as it really has

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not: did I not say unto you: "Unless ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven?" Matt. xviii. 1—3.

Do you not remember likewise what I said to the two sons of Zebedee, when their mother came to me with that petition, that "they might sit, the one on the right hand, and the other on the left, in my kingdom?" Matt. xx. 20—24.

And have I not told you, that whereas in the kingdoms of this world they who are great exercise dominion and authority: "so it shall not be with you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister: and whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant?" Matt. xx. 25, 27.

Thus I have treated you from the beginning to this time. I have encouraged you to follow me, and to continue faithful to me, with the hazard of all things: and have directed you not to seek great things for yourselves here by any means, but riches and honour in the kingdom of heaven. And when I now speak to you of another world, and mansions therein, can any of you doubt the truth of what I say? How strange an idea must you then have of me! how injurious! But far be such a supposition as this. You are well satisfied of my sincerity: you have had full proof of that, and of my knowledge of all things: you must therefore be fully persuaded, that there are, as I say unto you, "mansions in my Father's house" for myself, and for you, and for all whom you, in the service to which you have been called and appointed, shall be able to bring to true virtue and goodness.

7. 'The relation we stand in to each other may assure you of my sincerity, and that I am 'to be relied upon in what I now say.'

Do men use to impose upon and deceive, and that in matters of importance, those whom they love, and by whom they are esteemed and beloved? I chose you out of the whole number of my disciples, to be usually with me: and I have taught you in public and in private: I have answered your questions, and removed your scruples: I have treated you as my friends: "for *all things* that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you," John xv. 15. And is my affection changed, that I should not "love you to the end" of my life? ch. xiii. 1.

"You" too "have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God," John xvi. 17. You have made a very acceptable profession of faith in me, and respect for me. When "many went back, and walked no more with me," John vi. 66, 67, you would not forsake me, though I left you to your own choice, to abide with me, or "go away:" and hitherto "ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations," Luke xxii. 28, and have shared in the reproach and obloquy cast upon me; whereby, as you cannot but know, you have not a little endeared yourselves to me: and now by your grief for my departure, in the manner I have spoken of (though that grief be not duly regulated) you have evidently shewn an esteem and value for me, and a concern for my honour: and can it be thought, that I should intend to delude you? Is it not much more reasonable to conclude, that the reality is fully answerable to the expressions made use of by me?

8. Once more, 'the circumstances we are in may assure you of my being sincere in what I say.'

Dying men have seldom any inclination to deceit and fallacy. The near prospect of death puts an end to such artifices, though they had been practised before. Moreover the cheerfulness, with which I speak of dying, and such a death as I have in view, may assure you, I am well satisfied about the consequences of it, as to myself. And "if I live, ye shall live also," John xiv. 19. If you love one another, as I have loved you, and perform all other things which I have recommended to you, our interests are the same. You are not now to go with me, nor to follow me immediately: but you shall follow me some time hence.

Let not then any afflictive circumstances in this world deject your spirits, or cause you to abandon a just and well-grounded expectation. My departure is only like that of one who goes before, to prepare for the rest of the company. And hereafter, if need be, I will come forth, and conduct you into the mansions which I now speak to you of.

So did our Lord comfort and encourage his disciples.

III. Having spoken to the two points in the text, I shall now add some remarks and inferences.

1. 'We may hence conclude, that it is of great importance to maintain the hope and expectation of another life.'

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Our Lord was pleased to enforce the conviction and persuasion of a future state upon the minds of his disciples, by the consideration of his own integrity, of which there were so many proofs, and which was absolutely unquestionable.

His apostles afterwards shew a like earnest concern to keep up in the minds of Christians a firm persuasion and lively hope of another life after this: "Wherefore," says St. Peter, "gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope unto the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. i. 13. In like manner the apostle to the Hebrews: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which has great recompense of reward: for ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise: for yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry," Heb. x. 35, 36. And it is with warmth that St. Paul expresseth himself to the Corinthians: "Now, if Christ be preached, that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?——Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners," 1 Cor. xv. 12, 33. Never let us hearken to such suggestions; for they discourage all generous actions. This life, at its best estate, is then, indeed, altogether vanity: yea this whole system of things, and all the designs of Providence, would then be mean and inconsiderable, and below the great characters of Creator and Governor of the world.

2. 'We hence learn how life and immortality may be said to be brought to light in the gospel.'

Allowing, that a future state of recompense, or immortal life, may be surely deduced from reason, and argued from divers parts of the Old Testament, it may be justly said to be brought to light through the gospel; it having there received a great deal of additional evidence. Here we have the solemn and express declaration and promise of one teaching in the name of God, and proving his mission by miracles: and the expectation is confirmed by every part of his doctrine, by the precepts and rules of life delivered by him, by the whole of his behaviour in this world, toward those who were dear to him, and toward others, by his unparalleled disinterestedness, by his zeal for the glory of God and the welfare of men, and by every virtue of his most excellent and exemplary life, and also by his death and resurrection, and by the sending down of gifts upon those who believed in him.

Moreover here the idea of the future happiness is improved above all the discoveries of reason. The body is to be raised up incorruptible and immortal: good men shall be made like unto the angels: they shall see God; and they shall meet together, and live and reign with Christ. Thus is the felicity of the saints described by the apostle at the consummation of all things: "And so shall we ever be with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17. In like manner speaks Christ himself to the disciples here: "And if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." And thus he prays for them: "Father, I will, that they whom thou hast given me be with me, where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me," John xvii. 24. By living with him, and "seeing him as he is," 1 John iii. 2, they will be brought to a most happy resemblance of him in purity and holiness; and their now frail bodies shall be made "like unto his most glorious body," Philip. iii. 21. This is a very delightful and exalted idea of the future happiness. How desirable is it to be with him, who is so excellent and amiable! whose society on earth was so engaging and improving! to be with him not only for a while, but for ever; and to be like him in eternal glory, and the perfection of virtue!

3. 'This doctrine affords support and comfort under all the troubles and afflictions of this mortal life, particularly the departure of dear and valuable friends.'

Our Lord makes use of this argument to pacify his disciples, who were greatly perplexed and distressed at the thought of his going away from them. St. Paul improves the same argument to the like purpose: "But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep: that ye sorrow not even as others, who have no hope: for if we believe, that Jesus died and rose again; even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him——Wherefore comfort one another with these words," 1 Thess. iv. 13—18.

It is happiness to know good and great men: but then it is afflictive to part with them. However the principles of religion afford us comfort upon this, as well as other occasions of grief. Though earthly friends die, God lives for ever: and he will be with us, and bless us, if we fear and serve him. "When father and mother," and other friends, "forsake us," we are cast upon the divine care and protection: and then especially he will "take us up," Ps. xxvii. 10,

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and care for us. As for them, their removal is to their advantage. To "be with Christ is far better," than to abide here, Phil. i. 23. "Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord: they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them," Rev. xiv. 13. This we cannot doubt to be the case of our late excellent friend.

Shall I now take some notice of the gifts bestowed upon him, the use he made of them, the acceptance he met with, and the fruit of his endeavours? Will not this answer some good ends and purposes? May it not assuage our grief, increase our gratitude to God, excite our emulation, and direct our practice?

Dr. JEREMIAH HUNT was born in London, June 11, 1678. His father dying, when he was not more than two years of age; he, with his two sisters, was left, under Providence, to the care of a tender mother: who, when he grew up, intended to put him to a trade. But he choosing to serve God in preaching the gospel, and earnestly desiring to continue his studies with that view, she complied with his request: and with the assistance of her relations, of whom she had several in good circumstances, she gave her son a truly liberal education.

When he had been sufficiently instructed in grammar learning, he began his academical studies at Mr. Thomas Rowe's, a minister in this city. After that he went to Edinburgh, and from thence to Leyden in Holland.

There is sometimes a happy concurrence of circumstances for forming and qualifying persons of elevated minds for important service; such seems to have been the case here: and, as we may reasonably think, not without a kind and over-ruling Providence: forasmuch as the gifts, bestowed upon any men, are not barely for themselves, nor for vain shew and ostentation, but for the benefit of others.

The professors of Leyden at that time were men of great renown for ability and skill in the several branches of literature: and indeed it is so ordered by the wisdom of the government, that for the most part the professors chairs in that university are filled with men who are an ornament to the republic of letters, and greatly advance its interests by their writings and other labours: and there is a great resort of youth of all ranks, who are designed for law or magistracy, divinity and medicine; and that not only from the several cities of the Province of Holland, but from all the Provinces, and from several parts of Europe; more especially from England, Germany, and the Northern Countries. And many of them come thither with the same views, that carry our young Gentlemen over; for completing the studies, which they had begun, and made some progress in, at universities nearer home. Whence it comes to pass, that there are many, who are not mere novices, but have made some considerable advances in knowledge: and the quality, especially from Germany, are usually attended by governors, who are well-bred Gentlemen, and are not only masters of the ancient learning, but well acquainted likewise with modern history, and the views and interests of the several courts of Europe.

Education in such a place of general resort is of great use: and acquaintance with men of different nations, and remote countries, who bring with them the knowledge they have gained in distant nurseries of learning, though that acquaintance should be slight and transient only, opens and enlarges the mind, renders men less impatient of contradiction, and less offended at the different opinions and manners of men, and lays the foundation of many other agreeable advantages to the person himself, and to those among whom his future lot is cast.

He also met with a competent number of his own countrymen, persons of good families, sober, well-disposed, studious: many of whom have since made a good figure in life, some in the ministry, some in other stations of honour and usefulness.

Moreover, Mr. Millan, the minister of the English church at Leyden, was a man eminent for piety, learning, and a just discernment of things: and his discourses on Lord's days in the forenoon were, as I have heard, as suitable and profitable for students, especially for students in divinity, as the professors [a] lectures.

[a] I once supposed, from what I had heard occasionally, that Mr. Millan delivered in those sermons a system of Jewish antiquities. But a gentleman, who was then at Leyden, represents the subject of them in this manner: 'That Mr. Millan for 'many months together preached upon the genuiness and au-'thority of the scriptures of the Old Testament, as they ap-'peared from the Masorite doctors and other Jewish writers, '&c. which afforded much instruction and entertainment to 'the English students.' The gentleman, from whom I have this, was then very young. And it is easy to suppose, that his account is not complete. However it hence appears, that those discourses of Mr. Millan tended to lead his hearers into the knowledge of the scriptures, and Jewish learning.

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Mr. Millan's conversation likewise must have been of no small benefit to those English students who were so wise as to desire and value it: and so wise Mr. Hunt was, as will appear presently.

According to the best information I have been able to obtain, Mr. Hunt came to Leyden in August or September 1699, and left it to return home some time in the year 1701.

Whilst he was there, he studied ecclesiastical history and sacred geography under the very celebrated Frederick Spanheim; and heard the lectures of the other professors on philosophy, civil law, and divinity; and particularly the very useful lectures of Perizonius upon universal history, which held ten months, and were always well attended. 'Here Mr. Hunt entered himself to be one of the few out of a very numerous audience, who were to be publicly examined every Saturday, concerning the lectures of the preceding part of the week. When he so acquitted himself, as to give entire satisfaction and much pleasure to the professor himself, and all the students in general.'

In the month of January in the year $\frac{1699}{1700}$ or thereabout, a Rabbi[a] from Lithuania opened a lecture for teaching Jewish learning. He was reckoned a man of virtue, and very knowing in his profession: and not long after he publicly embraced the Christian religion. Five or six at least of the English students, beside others, had the curiosity to attend his lecture; one of whom was Mr. Hunt: and Mr. Millan too was pleased to join himself to their number. The Rabbi having carried them through the Hebrew grammar proceeded to read and explain to them the Misna, the great repository of the ancient Jewish learning: but it was not long, before several of our young countrymen, disheartened by the difficulty of the study, gave out. Mr. Millan however, and Mr. Hunt, and perhaps another, were unwearied and persevered. Some there were, who could not but wonder at Mr. Hunt's extraordinary diligence in what they deemed a fruitless study: but he was unmoved, and has since declared, 'that from those lectures he had reaped such pleasure and improvement as abundantly compensated all his past labour and toil.' For certain this was [b] a price put into the hand of one who knew how to make use of it, Prov. xvii. 16.

And thus Mr. Hunt, having good natural parts, and being inquisitive, and thirsting after knowledge, made all the improvement of these several advantages which his friends at home could wish or desire.

He began to preach while he was in Holland: the occasion I take to have been this; there was then a small English congregation at Amsterdam; being destitute of a pastor, they applied to the candidates for the ministry at Leyden for a supply. For any one of them to undertake it, would have been too great an interruption in his studies, and an obstruction to future usefulness. However three of them consented to preach to them by turns for a while: one of whom was our friend.

And it is not unlikely, that this was the first occasion of his preaching without notes, that being the universal custom abroad: but I presume, that he did not then, any more than since, write out his sermons at length; but having with care and diligent examination made himself master of his text and subject, and well digested his thoughts, he clothed them in the language, which offered in the delivery: not neglecting however a due care in the preparation, as well as afterwards, to secure propriety and perspicuity of expression.

Which to me appears an excellent method, when there are sufficient abilities for it; I mean a stock of knowledge, readiness of thought, and a good memory: all which talents fell to the lot of our friend in a high degree of perfection. I have been told, that whilst he was preaching one of those his first sermons in Holland, he was by some means led into a mistaken computa-

[a] 'That Rabbi in the summer following publicly renounced 'Judaism, and was baptised on a week-day in St. Peter's 'church at Leyden by professor J. Trigland, (who probably 'was rector of the university at that time.) The professor 'Trigland appeared to be his good friend, and had him often 'at his house.' This information I have received from a gentleman who was then at Leyden. How that Rabbi behaved, and what became of him afterwards, I have not learned: except that another friend, who was at Leyden some time after this, tells me, he left that city, and went into Germany.

[b] St. Jerom had two Hebrew masters, first a converted Jew, afterwards another, who retained his Judaism. Ad quam edomandam, cuidam fratri, qui ex Hebræis crediderat, me in disciplinam tradidi. Ad Rust. Ep. 95. al. 4. T. 4. p. 774. m. Hebræam linguam, quam ego ab adolescentia multo labore ac sudore ex parte didici.—Ad Eustoch. Ep. 86. al. 27. p. 686. m. Veni rursum Jerosolymam et Bethleem. Quo labore, quo pretio Bar-aninam nocturnum habui præceptorem! Timebat enim Judæos, et mihi alterum exhibebat Nicodemum. Ep. 41. al. 65. ib. p. 342. f. Vid. et adv. Ruf. l. 1. p. 363.

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tion of the time: and thinking he had not yet filled up the hour, he continued his discourse for some good while beyond his first intention, and the usual time, without any discernible confusion, or disagreeable tautology.

Upon his return to England, he preached three years as assistant to a congregation at Tunstead, near Norwich; where he was greatly esteemed, and earnestly importuned to settle with them: but there were some considerations, of no small moment, which prevented his complying with their request. However there are still some families in that place and its neighbourhood, which to this very day, as I am well assured, have a most affectionate and respectful remembrance of him.

Not long after his coming up to London, in the year 1707, he was called to the pastoral office in this congregation, which he accepted, and has discharged with great reputation, through divine mercy, for about seven and thirty years, to the day of his death.

In the year 1729, the University of Edinburgh, out of a regard to his distinguished merit, complimented him with the highest honorary title in their gift: a piece of respect not to be slighted by any man of letters. Nevertheless, such was his modesty, I believe, it gave more satisfaction to his friends, than to himself.

His manner of preaching has been so remarkable, that I think myself obliged to remind you of it somewhat distinctly: for in the time of his laborious ministry among you, he has gone over the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles more than once. And once at least he has in a like manner explained and improved the epistles of the New Testament throughout, and in order; and also the first three chapters of the book of the Revelation. Since that he has preached upon the more useful and practical parts of the Epistles in a way somewhat less continued. He preached over the whole book of Proverbs, making some passages in that book his subject every Lord's day morning for some of those years in which he preached twice in the day. And afterwards he began, and finished a course of sermons on the principles of religion and the main doctrines of the Christian revelation, and their connection and influence on each other.[a]

His great concern all along has manifestly been to attain the true sense of scripture, and faithfully to make known what he judged to be the will of God to those whom he had undertaken to instruct and admonish. This he did with great impartiality, remarkable disinterestedness, and inflexible integrity.

If at any time he exceeded himself, so far as I understand, it was, when he was explaining and improving that part of the apostolic history where mention is made of the leave which St. Paul took of the elders of the church of Ephesus. Acts xx. 17—35. In the course of those sermons there was so warm, so natural, so unaffected and solemn an appeal to his stated hearers, that he had in his own ministerial conduct uprightly endeavoured to copy after St. Paul, and follow the example which he there represents himself to have given; that though it is now many years since those sermons were preached, I find they do still make very lively and affecting impressions on some of you, and those of the best proficiency. I presume, they must be remembered by many: and I humbly hope, that few or none, who heard them, will ever forget them.[b]

Though he seldom committed his sermons to writing, they were not extempore effusions; but the fruit of serious study, and impartial examination: for he delighted in every part of his work, and in composing his sermons he consulted the original, and the ancient versions, not omitting to look into the most celebrated critics and commentators. And he carefully consi-

[a] I have likewise an authentic account of another set of sermons, preached not long after his settlement at Pinners-hall. It is the copy of a letter sent by him to a judicious divine, with whom he had contracted a pleasing acquaintance during his stay in Norfolk. 'Mr. Hunt sends his 'learned friend an account of his preaching, to be approved 'or disapproved, and for him to let him know what he dis-'liked. He informs him, that he had proved a God, and 'represented the grounds on which our faith in the scriptures 'is founded. Then he treated on the attributes of God. He 'had considered also the government of our first parents, the 'fitness of their being tried by prohibiting the eating a cer-'tain fruit, and the consequences of it. He had given a suc-'cinct account of the religion before the flood, and the fitness 'of translating Enoch. This had been the subject of his last 'discourse at the time of writing this letter: at the conclu-'sion of which he assures his friend, that he took all the care 'he could to urge what is the last end of revealed truth, viz, 'divine temper and life.'

[b] 'At another season, in several discourses upon 2 Tim. 'iii. 10, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine," &c. he 'in a summary and paraphrastical way observed St. Paul's 'doctrine, as represented in the Acts of the Apostles, and in 'his own epistles: and he shewed the occasion, scope and 'design of all St. Paul's epistles.' Some of Dr. Hunt's hearers have a distinct remembrance of those discourses, and are very thankful for the instruction they received by them.

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dered the words themselves, the connections, and the main scope of the writer. Then he endeavoured to choose the clearest and easiest method. After all this care it is not to be wondered, that his remarks were just, and his inferences pertinent; and that his sermons might be easily understood, and long remembered by all that were attentive: and indeed there are several ministers, as well as private Christians, who have improved their judgment by only hearing him occasionally.

It was his constant care to represent the true sense of scripture, and the doctrine, which according to the best of his judgment was conformable to it: nor could he ever be induced to conceal or disguise what he thought to be the truth, for the sake of popular applause, or to avoid, or silence the censures of mistaken and prejudiced men. He might therefore truly say with St. Paul, and take the comfort of it: "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ," 2 Cor. ii. 17. And with the same apostle he might say again: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God (or according to the gospel of God, and in a manner worthy of the favour we have received, and the high office we have been intrusted with) we have had our conversation in the world, ch. i. 12.

In brief, his preaching was scriptural, critical, paraphrastical, and consequently instructive. It was also very practical, and sometimes pathetically so at the conclusion.

As his preaching was mightily suited to form in men a rational conviction of the truths of religion, and to carry them on to perfection; so his audience, though not numerous, has usually consisted of the more knowing and understanding Christians. And it must be owned, that they do honour to themselves who discern true merit, and cheerfully encourage an open and steady friend to truth and liberty. And they who receive such an one in the name of Christ, and honour him for his work's sake, as bringing with him the doctrine of pure and undefiled religion, especially when under difficulties, are entitled to a like reward with him. So he said to his disciples, who is truth itself, and never encouraged delusive hopes, or groundless expectations: "He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall have a Prophet's reward," Matt. x. 40, 41.

He ever was extremely cautious of assuming authority in the church of God. It was his common advice to persons arrived at years of discretion, 'to judge for themselves, and act 'according to conviction;' which is very natural for those, who make the scriptures the rule of their faith, and have with care and diligence formed their own judgment upon them. Herein, then, as well as in other things already mentioned, he shewed himself a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. He remembered, that "one is our master, even Christ," and that "all we are brethren," Matt. xxiii. 8. So did St. Paul: "We preach not ourselves," says he, "but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," 2 Cor. iv. 5. Which is also agreeable to St. Peter's directions to bishops, that they should not act as "lords over God's heritage, but as ensamples to the flock." Such he assures us, "when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, will receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. v. 3.

As yet I have represented but a part of his usefulness. His talents for instructing and improving the mind were not confined to the pulpit. His conversation also was a great blessing to many. I believe, there are several families of God's people, beside those of his own congregation, where the younger, and perhaps some of the elder branches, are not a little indebted to him for a rational religion, and a well-grounded faith in the gospel.

His religious conferences were oftentimes accompanied with prayer. For as he daily prayed in his own family, so he likewise frequently prayed in the families of his Christian friends and acquaintance.

Such was the strength of his memory, that this knowledge, though of a vast compass, was always ready for use; whereby he was eminently qualified to be communicative. And, whenever he met with an ingenuous temper of mind, and a disposition to attend, he failed not to bring forth out of his rich treasure. There are not a few, both near and afar off, men of good understanding, of different ages and stations in life, who will readily stand up, and acknowledge, that there is no man from whom they have received more useful hints concerning the important subjects of virtue and religion, than from him.

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He has not published so much as might have been expected: however, enough to shew his sentiments concerning natural and revealed religion, and to justify the character I have given him.

So the apostles of Christ, and their companions, usually called apostolical men, as an ancient writer observes, [a] either wrote nothing at all, or but little: (neither the gospels, nor the epistles of the New Testament, being of any great length) yet they have ever been esteemed the most eminently, and most extensively useful ministers of Christ's kingdom. They who have received knowledge from him, will communicate it to others, both in public and private, in discourse and writing. Upon the whole, I always esteemed Dr. Hunt as useful a minister as any in his time. Which opinion has been as much founded upon the usefulness of his conversation, as of his preaching and writing.

His sentiments in religion appear to be very just, and to deserve an attentive regard.

He was of opinion, 'that the facts, upon which the Christian religion is founded, have a 'stronger proof than any facts at such a distance of time: and that the books, which convey 'them down to us, may be proved to be uncorrupted and authentic with greater strength than 'any other writings of equal antiquity.

'Piety,' says he, 'and extensive virtue, are final in religion. Principles of truth are instru-'mental. What is positive is to be regarded only as means.'

Again: 'The principles of truth, relating to natural or revealed religion, and particularly 'to the Christian doctrine, are to be considered as instrumental, and designed to bring us to 'sobriety, righteousness and godliness. And are not available to our perfection and happiness, 'unless these are produced by them.' [b]

The respect due to moral and positive precepts is happily and briefly expressed by him in this manner: 'Let us take care, that we do not raise positive duties above moral, which are 'of eternal and immutable obligation, and the end of true religion. And yet let us be careful 'to observe what bears the stamp of divine authority: let us not insolently make a religion for 'God, but receive it as he has delivered it to us by reason and revelation.'

The design of the ordinance of the Lord's supper has been thus represented by him: 'By 'receiving the sacrament men do not enlist themselves in any party: but only in general profess 'themselves Christians, and thereby declare their resolution to pursue steadily religious virtue, 'as the last design of the institution of Christ.'

If it should be asked, what is meant by religious virtue, some other words of his will explain it. 'Virtue is doing what is right, fit, and agreeable to the truth of things. And it becomes 'religious virtue when practised out of a regard to God: who, as a perfect moral agent, must 'in consequence, will, that such creatures as are made capable of it, should conform to what 'reason dictates.'

Our friend, whose decease we lament, had a wonderful strength of mind. I remember him to have said to me some years ago, though without vanity (from which no man was more free) that he believed he could with consideration recollect almost all the sermons he had ever preached. This has been lately confirmed to me, and more distinctly, by a common friend, in these very words: 'His judgment was so exact, that when he had once fixed the sense of a text, 'his memory could retain it for many years; and he could easily, and in a very little time, recol-'lect the method in which he had treated it, the inferences he had made, and the whole ser-'mon. This was surprising, as he had no notes: and yet I have known him preach a sermon 'upon half an hour's recollection, which he had preached about fourteen years before: and he 'himself told me, he did not believe he had missed three sentences. This was not a peculiar 'case: but he had fixed his sermons in general in his head. What an uncommon strength of 'judgment and memory was this!'

This great capacity had been cultivated with care and diligence: accordingly his acquired attainments were proportionable. As much may be easily inferred from what was before said of his preparatory studies. He well understood the several schemes of ancient and modern philosophy. To the very end of his life he continued to read, by way of amusement at least, the celebrated ancient writers both Greek and Roman, whether poets, philosophers, or historians. These are authors, with which men of the learned professions are generally acquainted.

[a] Σπουδης της περι το λογογραφειν μικραν ποιεμενοι φροντιδα. Eus. H. E. l. 3, c. 24, p. 94. D.

[b] See his Sermon upon Penance, p. 37.

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But I presume, I may say, without disparagement to any, that he was a better judge of their beauties and perfections, blemishes and defects, than most are. He had also read the remains of the ancient Greek mathematicians, which is an uncommon part of literature. He had a good knowledge of the civil law. In early life he was celebrated for skill in the Hebrew language and Rabbinical learning. He was well acquainted with ecclesiastical history, and had read the ancient Christian writers. But the Bible was his principal study: and the knowledge, in which he most excelled, was the knowledge of the scriptures. Few men, I believe, can be named in any age, who have equalled him therein.

To this last particular, more especially, I apprehend to be owing the great contempt he had for infidels, commonly called deists; who pretend to condemn revelation, without ever having carefully studied and considered it: and though they are apt to give themselves airs of superior knowledge, he looked upon the whole body of them as a sort of men who have only a very superficial knowledge both of scripture and antiquity. To this ignorance of theirs he in part ascribed their infidelity: for he used to assert, that all antiquity confirms and corroborates revelation; and he had a strong persuasion, that the next age would be as remarkable for enthusiasm, as this for infidelity: forasmuch as those two extremes, he said, take turns, and mutually produce, or occasion each other.

If our friend was a man of great capacity, and various learning; yet sincere piety, uncommon meekness of temper, and mildness of speech and behaviour, most amiable and unaffected modesty, and remarkable inoffensiveness and peaceableness, are as distinguishing parts of his character, as learning and knowledge.

He was a tender husband: as he too was happy in a consort, who by her prudent management of the affairs of the family afforded him entire liberty to pursue his studies, and discharge the offices of his ministerial function without distraction.

What care he took to instil the best principles, and impart the most useful knowledge to his children, as their minds gradually opened, their own consciences will bear him witness: and it is to be hoped (which indeed I have no cause to distrust) that their future behaviour in life will shew, that his paternal care and concern have not been in vain; and that they will prove every way worthy of such constant, familiar instruction and example.

The benevolence of his temper, his sincerity, disinterestedness, and communicativeness, rendered him a most desirable and valuable friend.

He sympathised with the afflicted: and though he was a man of strong reason, and had a rightly informed judgment and understanding, he did not deny the use of the passions; which have been placed in us by our Creator, and make a part of our constitution.

I have reason to think, that he was liberal to the poor to the utmost of his circumstances, if not beyond them. And he has wished, that men of wealth would sometimes visit the habitations of the poor and sick: supposing, that a near view of their scanty accommodations might soften their temper, and dispose them to afford all the relief that is in their power.

In his latter years he has been several times afflicted with severe fits of the stone and gravel, the acute pains of which he bore with exemplary patience and resignation. And he had behaved likewise with great firmness and steadiness under some very trying afflictions and difficulties, which he met with in the former part of his life.

For about a year before he died, there appeared in him a visible decay; and he seemed to feel it himself: for his prayers and conversation turned much upon his approaching change. He would also lament, that he could be useful no longer, and was afraid of outliving his usefulness. But when he spake of death, it was with great calmness and composure of mind: and he declared, he was more afraid of the pain of dying, than of the consequences of death. However in that he was greatly favoured. For about a month before his death, he seemed more brisk and cheerful than he had been for some time: and his friends hoped they might have enjoyed him longer. But as he was walking a little way into the country, to see a friend, he had an unhappy fall, which bruised his leg. No danger was apprehended at first: but on the fourth day it threw him into a fever, the place mortified, and the mortification brought on a lethargy. All proper means were used, but in vain. When his friends roused him, he answered very sensibly: but soon fell into his dosing again, from which he never awaked. For on Wednesday morning, a little after nine of the clock, the fifth of this month, without either sigh or groan, or the least struggling, he in the most easy and composed manner breathed his last. An affec-

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tionate friend, who stood by his bed-side, tells: 'Though he never could bear to see any one 'die before, yet he saw nothing formidable, or to give him any uneasiness, except that he was 'losing his dear and faithful friend.'

Such has been the life, and such the death of our honoured friend. His life has been a course of laborious service in the church of God, and an example of uniform, stedfast, growing virtue; and his end has been peace. If we copy his example, and observe the rules of life, faithfully taught, and earnestly inculcated by him, we may hope to meet him again in a state of perfection and happiness. With these, and such like thoughts and considerations, let us comfort ourselves, and others, who sympathise with us, and mingle their tears with ours; being affected with the loss which both we and they have sustained.

4. Lastly, 'This subject is confirming and animating, as well as comforting.'

In our Father's house are many mansions. There are regions of light and immortality: there is a world, wherein dwells righteousness: where intelligent beings are admitted to the sublimest entertainments: where there is no death, nor pain, and where all sorrow and sighing are fled away. Forasmuch as such a joy is set before us, let us lay aside every weight, and perform the services now lying before us with fidelity and diligence.

We have had a new testimony to the truth of religion. Our deceased friend was "an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile," John i. 47. Of his sincerity there were many undeniable proofs, and it was liable to no suspicions. He had as good reason, as any, to know, whether virtue has a real excellence, and whether it be recommended by religion, or be the will of God: whether it has any delights and comforts here, and may expect a reward hereafter. He has spoken and acted as if these things were true and certain; and, if they were not so, he would have told us.

Let us improve this thought for our establishment: let us reckon ourselves obliged to weigh maturely, and recollect frequently, what we have heard from him upon these important points, whether in public or private. Far be it, that any of the stated hearers, near relatives, or intimate friends of this excellent man, and faithful servant of God, should be so far misled by the temptations of the times, as ever to become infidels in opinion, or libertines in practice. I rather hope and believe, that remembering how he taught, and how he walked; and mindful of other helps, still afforded them; not forsaking the assemblies of divine worship, as is the manner of some; but by an open profession of religion animating and confirming each other; and joining with a love of liberty a hearty zeal for true piety, they will withstand the snares of an evil world, and maintain their integrity to the end of life: and so be to him a crown of glory, and rejoice with him in the day of the Lord, Heb. x. 23—25.

Finally, "my beloved brethren, let us be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: forasmuch as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58.

SERMONS UPON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

SERMON I.

THE DUTY OF CONSIDERATION.

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. Psal. cxix. 59.

In these words two things are observable; first, the Psalmist's practice: "He thought on his ways." Secondly, the result and consequence of that practice: "He turned his feet unto God's testimonies.

The text therefore presents to us these two points, consideration, and the happy effect of it; reformation, or amendment. These will be the subjects of the present discourse: and this is the method to be observed by us:

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I. To shew what is implied in consideration, or thinking on our ways.

II. To observe the proper effect thereof, which is amendment.

III. After which, in the way of application, I would recommend the practice of consideration by some motives.

I. I am to shew, in the first place, what is implied in consideration, or thinking on our ways.

1. It implies a recollecting, and taking a survey of our past conduct, with a view of detecting the sins and errors of it, as well as observing the good we have done.

To think on our ways is to recollect and bring to remembrance the past actions of our life, good and bad: more especially our latter, but also our former conduct: nor only our outward actions, but likewise our thoughts and intentions, the principles and views of our actions, in the several past periods of our life, and the various circumstances we have been in: how far our behaviour has been suitable to the dispensations of Divine Providence towards us: what we have been, and what we have done: how we have behaved in times of prosperity, or of adversity: how far we have regarded and performed, or neglected and omitted, the duties owing to God or men, in the stations we have been in; by which it may appear, that this is a wide field of meditation to expatiate in.

2. In the practice of this duty is implied seriousness and deliberation.

"I thought on my ways." I recollected them, as just shewn: and that seriously and deliberately. I did not bestow only some few slight and cursory reflections on myself and my past conduct: but I acted with seriousness and deliberation, being sensible, it is a thing of no small moment. I allotted some time to this work, and called off my thoughts from other matters, to think of myself and my ways. I laid aside other business, and redeemed some time from the hurries of life, for the sake of this necessary review. I desisted from farther pursuits until I had surveyed my past conduct, and could judge how far it has been right, or how far wrong: whether I ought to proceed in the present course, or whether it ought not in several respects to be altered and corrected.

3. "I thought on my ways:" I considered and examined them impartially.

This I did, knowing that God sees all things, and that he is acquainted with all my wanderings. He tries the hearts, and knows all the ways of the sons of men. He is the best judge of integrity, and will approve of it: he is not to be deceived by false pretences, and specious appearances. All the actions of my life, and all the purposes of my heart, ever since I have enjoyed this rational nature, and have arrived to the exercise of its powers, have been under his notice: and he discerns the present frame and actings of my mind.

When therefore I thought on my ways, I resolved to do it in the fear, and as in the presence of God. I set aside partial and too favourable regards for myself, and resolved not to heed now the fair, and too agreeable speeches of friends or flatterers: but to know the truth concerning myself, and to pass a right judgment upon my ways.

I examined myself, then, and weighed my actions in an equal balance, without a favourable and partial indulgence: but yet, as I was persuaded I ought to do, without a rigour and severity that has no bounds, and directly, and necessarily leads to despair and despondency: believing, that equity, mercy, and compassion, are branches of eternal righteousness, and some of the glories of that infinitely perfect Being who made the world. He certainly is not strict to mark iniquity: he knows all the weaknesses and disadvantages of his creatures, as well as the powers and advantages he has bestowed upon them. He does not equally resent involuntary and undesigned failings, and deliberate and wilful wickedness. He is ever ready to pardon the penitent, and accepts the sincere and upright, though they are not perfect.

As therefore I would confess and acknowledge all the offences I can descry, with hopes of finding favour with God; so would I humbly rejoice, and take satisfaction in every instance of virtuous conduct, hoping it may be graciously approved of and accepted by him to whom I am accountable; and who is greater than my heart, and knoweth all things.

4. "I thought on my ways." It may be herein implied, I have done it frequently.

"I thought on my ways:" This is a practice, which I have supposed to be incumbent on me. The heat of action, and the hurry and business of life, occasion much inconsideration: and various circumstances there are which throw us off our guard: and temptations prevail, before we are aware.

Various are the temptations of this world: and my strong affections are apt to carry me

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beyond the bounds of reason. In the multitude of my words, in my many thoughts and actions, I fear there has not wanted some, if not much sin and folly. I have therefore thought it, in the course of my life, a fit and proper practice, frequently to review my conduct, and call myself to an account, and not to suffer any long space of time to pass without this exercise of my mind.

5. "I thought on my ways:" and when I did so, I carefully compared them with the rule of right; the reason of things, and the revealed will of God.

As already observed, I have recollected my past conduct; I have reviewed it seriously and deliberately; sincerely and impartially; and frequently, laying hold of all fit opportunities for so doing: and whenever I did so, it was my concern, carefully to compare my actions by the rule of right; the reason of things, and the will of God, as revealed in his word.

I then observed the intrinsic excellence, and the beauty and comeliness of virtue, and all holiness; and the real evil and foul deformity of vice. I discerned the reasonableness and perfection of God's precepts: that what he commands is fit to be done, and that what he forbids ought to be avoided by every rational being: "All the statutes of the Lord are right," Ps. xix. 8, and should be steadily regarded by his creatures. I perceived therefore, that all my thoughts and actions, which agreed not with the rule of God's word, were foolish and wicked, such as ought to be condemned by me, of which I have reason to be ashamed, and for which I now humble and abase myself. All such actions have been contrary to the will and pleasure of my sovereign, and unsuitable to the dignity of my nature. And all the while I have wandered from the right way of holiness and obedience to God, I have been weakening and sinking the powers of my mind, and have more and more indisposed myself for the enjoyment of true happiness.

6. "I thought on my ways:" and when I did so, I considered the several advantages I have enjoyed, and the peculiar obligations I have been under; and was thereby led to take notice of the many aggravations of my transgressions, and my defects.

Every thing contrary to truth, purity, and righteousness is evil, in all beings who have reason and understanding: but the guilt of transgressors increases in proportion to the knowledge they have of the will of God, and the reasonableness and equitableness of what is required of them. Some have clearer discoveries concerning duty, than others: and by the many blessings, vouchsafed them in the course of providence, they have been laid under special obligations to attend to the indications of the Divine Mind.

When I thought on my ways, I could not but own this to be my case. The divine will, and motives to obey it, have been often set before me in a clear and affecting manner. I have had many means and helps for preventing sin, and securing a virtuous conduct: and the favours of Divine Providence have laid me under strong obligations to improve those helps, and to excel, and be steady in virtue.

I see reason therefore to own, that I have acted against convictions of duty, and that by temptation I have been induced to act contrary to resolutions, formerly made. I can recollect too, that I have not kept that strict watch over myself, which I knew to be fit and needful in this present world, so beset with dangerous snares and temptations.

Upon the whole, in recollecting and reviewing my conduct I discerned many things for which no good excuse or apology can be made: and therefore I saw great reason to condemn and blame myself on that account. And considering the advantages, which I have enjoyed; my many past transgressions, and my still remaining defects are attended with no small aggravations.

7. "I thought on my ways," and considered the rewards and encouragements of virtuous conduct, and sincere obedience to God: and the sad consequences of sin, and the unavoidable ruin and misery of such as persist in it.

For a difference there is in things, as I am fully persuaded, and see plain reason to believe: and God, the Lord and Governor of the world, is perfectly righteous and holy: and he certainly will some time make a difference between the obedient and faithful, and the disobedient and unfaithful among his creatures. It is altogether fit and reasonable he should do so: it is impossible therefore for me to reconcile the hopes of happiness with wilful sin, persisted in, and unrepented of. It must be confessed, and forsaken: or I can never think of finding mercy with God, so as to entertain any prospect of the reward that shall be bestowed on the righteous.

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This is what is implied in the duty of consideration, or thinking on our ways.

II. Let us now observe the proper effect of this practice, which is amendment. "I thought on my ways," says the Psalmist, "and turned my feet unto thy testimonies."

That is one effect and advantage of this practice. But it is not the sole and only one. For to a good man it may be sometimes the ground and occasion of peace, joy, pleasing reflections, and comfortable hopes and expectations, and afford cause of thanksgiving to God. It will especially do so, at the end of life, to such as have made it a frequent practice, and have thereby been engaged in a strict and steady course of virtue. Like the apostle, they will be able to say: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in this world," 2 Cor. i. 12. And when he was yet nearer the period of his days on earth, he reflects, and looks forward in this manner: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day," 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

This satisfaction we may well suppose was sometimes the result of the Psalmist's thinking on his ways. For though he did not always perform agreeably to the obligations he was under, yet he never laid aside the profession of religion, nor abandoned himself to an allowed and deliberate course of wickedness. So he declares in this Psalm, ver. 102, "I have not departed from thy judgments, for thou hast taught me." And ver. 22, "remove away from me reproach and contempt:" for "I have kept thy testimonies." And ver. 165—167, "Lord, I have hoped in thy salvation, and done thy commandments. My soul has kept thy testimonies, and I love them exceedingly. I have kept thy precepts, and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee."

But this was one happy effect of serious consideration, or thinking on his ways, that he was better disposed and enabled to amend what had been hitherto amiss, and to advance in piety. As he says, ver. 67, "before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." There were errors and faults in his conduct, in the time of ease and prosperity, which afflictions had taught him to correct and reform.

So here in the text: "I thought on my ways:" and having on that recollection and review observed some, or even many defects and transgressions, "I turned my feet unto God's testimonies." Whatever I discerned to be contrary to duty, gave me grief and concern, and I resolved to do so no more. I determined not to persist in any thing which I had seen the evil of: knowing that any one sin, wilfully indulged, is a presumptuous disrespect to the authority of the divine law; and might harden my heart, and extirpate all sense of religion in my mind, until I become totally forsaken of God, and abandoned to all manner of wickedness.

Having seen my errors, I resolved to be for the future more exact, careful and circumspect. And I have actually found by experience, that this frequent, serious, and impartial recollecting and reviewing my past conduct has been of great use to me, and proved an excellent mean of my amendment and improvement.

III. It remains, that in the way of application I recommend this duty of consideration, or the practice of "thinking on our ways," by some motives.

1. It is a very fit and proper employment of rational creatures, whilst in a state of trial: wherein they labour under many frailties and imperfections, and are exposed to various snares and temptations.

What can be more proper for such beings, in such circumstances, than to "think on their ways?" They are accountable to God. And must it not be very becoming them, to shew a respect to him, and his laws, by frequently considering their behaviour: that, if at any time, through surprise, or any other means, they have been misled, they may make humble confessions of their offences, and resolve and aim and endeavour to do better in time to come.

2. I observe secondly, (which follows from what was just said) that this practice is very proper for all men.

It is proper for such, as have not yet seriously devoted themselves to God and his service: and also for those who are really and sincerely, but only imperfectly good. It is greatly needful, and of the utmost importance for the former, "to think on their ways." And it may be very expedient and beneficial for these last likewise. The Psalmist shews as much by his own

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example, who ought to be placed in this latter rank. And he may be well understood to intend, by this observation, to recommend the practice to others.

3. This exercise of the mind is oftentimes expressly recommended to men by God himself, or his prophets, speaking in his name, and by his authority.

In the first chapter of the book of Isaiah God laments and complains, as it were, that "Israel did not know, his people did not consider," Is. i. 3. And earnestly calls to them to attend to the end of things. "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse, and rebel, ye shall be destroyed: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," ver. 16—20. They are severely checked and reproved, who go on securely in an evil way: not considering how displeasing such a course is to the Divine Being. "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence. Thou thoughtest that I was such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thee. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver," Ps. l. 21, 22.

And in the New Testament, says St. Paul, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your ownselves," 2 Cor. xiii. 5. And, "If any man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself: but let every man prove his own work. Then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another," Gal. vi. 3, 4. St. John is directed by our exalted Lord to write in this manner to the church of Ephesus: "Remember therefore, from whence thou art fallen: and repent, and do the first work," Rev. ii. 5. And St. Paul observes: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged," or condemned, "by the Lord," 1 Cor. xi. 21.

4. Which brings us to another argument for this practice: that God will hereafter try and judge us, and all men.

There is a day appointed for reviewing the actions of all mankind: and then every one will receive according to what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. This should be of great force to persuade us to think on our ways now, and seriously to recollect our past conduct; that all instances of misbehaviour may be blotted out, and corrected by the tears of unfeigned and timely repentance, and by hearty reformation and amendment.

5. There is a great deal of reason to apprehend that we shall be induced to think on our ways some time before our departure out of this world.

If ever we are brought into troubles and distresses, or have near apprehensions of death and judgment, then these reflections will be unavoidable, and these thoughts will disturb us, when the benefit will be uncertain. It must therefore be prudent to think on our ways in time, freely and voluntarily, and by a speedy and effectual repentance and amendment, to lay a foundation for pleasing reflections, and comfortable prospects, in a day of affliction, or at the time of death.

6. Lastly, let us attend to the great advantages of thinking on our ways.

It is a likely mean of repentance, of amendment, and of improvement in every thing good and excellent: we shall then know ourselves: we shall see the evil of sin, and be very sensible of the sad consequences of continuing therein: we shall turn from it, and carefully keep God's commandments to the end, without any more deliberately and wilfully forsaking, or turning aside from them.

This is the lesson of the text, and of what follows: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." Which last words, God willing, shall be the subject of our meditations the next opportunity.

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SERMON II.

THE UNREASONABLENESS OF DELAYS IN THINGS OF RELIGION.

I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.—Psal. cxix. 60.

THIS psalm is equally admirable for justness and piety of sentiment, and for exactness and elegance of composition. The prevailing principle running throughout, is a high esteem and veneration for the revealed will of God: which under some expression of law, word, statutes, ordinances, testimonies, or some other phrase of like import, is mentioned in almost every verse of the Psalm. Notwithstanding which, and the length of the meditation likewise, it is not chargeable either with tediousness or tautology. But there is a great and surprising variety, and the attention of the reader is kept up from the beginning to the end.

Indeed the variety is such, that it is somewhat difficult to make a summary of its contents, or represent in brief the several thoughts with which it is filled. However it may in general be said, that the Psalmist often professeth the regard he had for the divine law: and he aims to recommend to others the serious and diligent study of it, and a sincere and constant practice of all its precepts, as the only way to true blessedness. He declares the great and frequent experience he had of support and comfort from it in his distresses and afflictions. He vows perpetual obedience and conformity to it, notwithstanding the discouragements he might meet with from the world about him, and the multitude, or the greatness of transgressors. He prays also for farther instruction in God's word, and help to keep it to the end. The psalm is suited to comfort the dejected, to assist those who aim at the greatest perfection in virtue, to quicken the slothful and indolent, and to awaken sinners, and reclaim them from their wanderings.

The words of the text are more especially adapted to some of the last mentioned cases.

In the preceding verse he declares, that he had "thought on his ways:" the result of which was, that he was thereby disposed and enabled to amend them: and "I turned my feet unto thy testimonies." He adds here a very happy and commendable circumstance of that conversion, or alteration for the better: it was speedy, and immediate. "I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments."

Having lately explained and recommended to you the duty of consideration, or "thinking on our ways:" I now intend to recommend the imitation of the Psalmist in this circumstance, speediness of amendment wherever any thing has been amiss. The want of which is, probably, one of the most common failings which men are incident to. There are few, or none, but have some convictions of the evil of sin, and some perception and persuasion of the excellence and necessity of real holiness. They are aware that sin, unrepented of, must be of fatal consequence: and that without holiness no man can attain to the happiness of a future state. They intend therefore and hope to be truly holy in time. They would not die in sin, nor continue in it always. No, they propose to repent of it, and forsake it. They design to humble themselves greatly for all their transgressions, and to turn themselves from them to a sincere obedience to all God's commandments. But the time for putting these resolutions in practice is not yet come, and they hope it may be well done hereafter. This is very different from the example in the text. Which that all may be disposed to follow and imitate,

I. I will in the first place mention some considerations, shewing the evil of delays in the things of religion.

II. I will consider those pleas and excuses which some make for delaying to reform, and their objections against immediate compliance with the commands of God.

III. I intend also at the end to offer some motives and arguments, tending to induce men to perform what is their duty.

I. In the first place I shall mention some considerations, shewing the evil of delays in the things of religion.

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1. A sinner's delaying repentance and amendment is an act of great imprudence, and such as men are not ordinarily guilty of in other matters.

It is, I say, great imprudence to delay to reform; because it is a thing of the utmost importance, upon which depends our everlasting concerns, our happiness or misery in another state. Is not the condition of an habitual sinner extremely hazardous? Every one must own, that whilst a man is in any evil course, allowed of and indulged, he is under the displeasure of God. And if he die in that state and course, he is miserable beyond redress. The only way of averting the displeasure of God, and of escaping future misery, is that of sincere repentance. And how imprudent must it be to defer that a moment? Should not every discreet and thoughtful person desire to be in a safe condition, rather than in a state of great danger?

Should we not then be all ready to embrace the pardoning mercy of God, now offered to us, by confessing and forsaking our sins, as he requires? He will, then, "receive us graciously, and love us freely," Hos. xiv. 2, 4.

2. We ought seriously to consider the shortness and uncertainty of life. Can it be reasonable to defer a thing which we own ought to be done, when we are not certain that we shall have another opportunity of doing it? For we cannot depend upon tomorrow, not knowing what the present day may bring forth. All do not arrive at old age, or any other of the advanced periods of life. Numberless are the dangers to which we are exposed. And the strongest and most healthy may be taken off by sudden accidents.

Suppose death to make gradual approaches. Yet we are not certain what pains, what indispositions they are, that shall bring on the dissolution of soul and body. They may be such as shall immediately and utterly unqualify us for settling any of our affairs relating to this life, or making any preparations for another. How inconvenient then, how unsafe, how unwise must it be, to defer this important concern to a distant, unknown, and uncertain futurity!

3. You defer repenting and giving up yourself to God for the present, in hopes of doing so hereafter. But repentance will be more unlikely hereafter than now.

There cannot, I apprehend, be any reason to think it should be more likely in some future time, than the present. But there are many reasons to suppose the contrary.

You are not sure of having such calls to repentance as you now have, even supposing the continuance of life. You now enjoy means of virtue and holiness: and earnest and frequent calls and invitations are made to you. But it may not be always so. Your worldly affairs may place you in some other situation, where the like means are not to be had, which are now afforded you. Or, if the principles of religion do not now make a deep and abiding impression upon your minds, you may be prevailed upon by some worldly considerations, to forsake and abandon the ordinances of divine worship, and all the usual means of awakening, reforming, and reclaiming sinners. For these, and other the like reasons the scripture speaks of "an accepted time," and a "day of salvation," Is. xlix. 8, which it is of importance to improve, and very dangerous to neglect, 2 Cor. vi. 2.

If the ordinary means of holiness and salvation are continued, what reason is there to think that you should be at any time hereafter better disposed to improve them than you are now? Is there not rather a great deal of reason to fear, lest the heart should contract some hardness by a long continuance in sin? And if reasonable and forcible arguments do not now sway and prevail, they will be so far from influencing more hereafter, that they will affect much less than at present. Besides, by delaying and deferring you contract a habit of delaying, and do it with less remorse. Your first put-offs and excuses, perhaps, are not made without a good deal of uneasiness: and you are almost ashamed, or even confounded, when you make them: and your heart afterwards smites you for it. But having time after time excused and deferred compliance with the reasonable demands that have been made of you, you become more assured and confident; and such demands are for the future put off with little or no scruple, or concern of mind.

Moreover, it is a vain thing to imagine, that you may outlive temptations; and that the time may come, when there shall be no longer any impediments or obstructions of repentance and amendment. For there always will be temptations, suited to every age of life, which will have a powerful influence upon those who are not fully devoted to God, and have not attained to the government of their passions. If sensual pleasure be a bait that seduces and ensnares

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men in the early days of life, riches, and honour, and preferment are as taking with men of worldly minds, in the more advanced, and the very latest periods of life.

4. Late repentance, supposing it to be sincere and available and accepted of God, must be very bitter and sorrowful.

It cannot be otherwise. For you will have little or nothing to comfort you. And you will have a great number, and a long course of transgressions and neglects, to reflect upon with grief and concern. It will be very grievous to recollect many instances of ingratitude to God, who has been very good and gracious to you, who would not think of him, or pay a just regard to his reasonable and holy laws and commandments. You will then, severely blame and condemn yourselves for acting contrary to conviction, and for refusing to hearken to former pressing and friendly calls and invitations. You will be filled with the utmost concern to think how you have multiplied transgressions, and persisted therein: thereby offending God, and perhaps grieving men, whose comfort and happiness should have been dear to you. And it is well if you have not also the sad and bitter reflection to make, that by your sins, some of them more especially, you have been the means of misleading some of your fellow-creatures, and causing them to fall and miscarry.

5. But late repentance is seldom sincere.

I do not say that it is never sincere; but there is too much reason to think it is seldom so. The confessions and lamentations of men in sickness, and in visible danger of death, appear rather forced and unavoidable, than free and voluntary. And very often, when the danger is over, and health and safety are restored, and the temptations of life return with their usual force, men shew their repentance was not unfeigned and effectual, by returning to their former evil courses, and by being again entangled and overcome by this world, and the snares of it, as before.

6. Consequently, late repentance must be very uncomfortable.

For though it should be sincere, and accepted of God, you cannot ordinarily have a full and satisfactory persuasion of it in your minds. Some hope, possibly, you may entertain: but it will be weak and languid: somewhat between hope and despair, a sad mixture of doubt and fear, whether this late humiliation will be accepted or not. And forasmuch as you have not now an opportunity of approving to yourselves, or others, the truth of your repentance by future acts of steady obedience, and that in time of temptation you must go out of the world without that assured hope and expectation of a better life, and the heavenly happiness, which is very desirable and necessary to give peace in the hour of death.

These considerations shew the folly and danger of delaying repentance.[a]

II. I would now consider the pleas and excuses which some make for delaying to reform, and their objections against immediate compliance with the commands of God, and against forming a present resolution to be immediately religious.

1. Some think with themselves, and are apt to plead, that a life of strict virtue and serious religion is unpleasant, sad and melancholy: depriving men of the pleasures and entertainments of life, and of much worldly gain and profit, which they might otherwise make.

To this I answer two things.

1.) Allowing the truth of all this, it is not a good and reasonable ground of deferring to be really good and virtuous, and securing the happiness of a future life: because things earthly and temporal are not to be compared with things heavenly and eternal. These last are greatly superior and preferable in real excellence, just value, and length of duration. And therefore, if the possessions and enjoyments of this world are inconsistent and incompatible with heavenly treasures and enjoyments, they may be reasonably quitted and resigned for the sake of these. If both were proposed and set before us: but one, certainly, without the other: there could be no doubt or hesitation which should be chosen and preferred. Let the path of virtue be ever so thorny, strait, and difficult, if it lead to eternal life, we should resolve to enter on it, and persist in it. The reward at the end will crown all our labours, and make full recompense for all our self-denial and patience.

2.) But, secondly, this is not altogether true. Men have no reason to be shy of the paths of virtue, as sad, gloomy, and melancholy. Many are the testimonies, which wise and good men,

[a] If any find this sermon too long for a single reading, here is a proper pause.

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who have made trial, have borne in favour of virtue and real goodness. Solomon recommending to men true wisdom, and the ways she prescribes and teaches, says, "Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," Prov. iii. 16, 17.

Put the case of the most prosperous sinner, and the most afflicted saint, and compare them together. The former will scarce have the advantage, as to this present life.

It should not be overlooked, nor forgotten, that religion does not deprive men of any of the innocent enjoyments of life, or of any lawful gain and worldly advantage. In the way of virtue many good men find a large share of these things. And whatever they possess, they enjoy it without the sting of guilty reflections, and the remorse of unrighteousness and oppression. And if at any time, in the course of things, they are called to resign any earthly advantages; their religious principles and virtuous dispositions enable them to do it without regret, and support them under such losses.

It must be obvious to all, that the end of such is preferable to that of other men, which is a thing of no small moment. This the Psalmist speaks of with the fullest assurance, and calls upon all men to take notice of it: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace," Ps. xxxvii. 37.

They have also many comforts in the way. They have a delightful communion with God in devout exercises of the mind, in prayer and praise, performed in a spiritual manner, accompanied with humility, gratitude, trust in the divine care and providence, and resignation to his will. They have pleasure in the persuasion of the divine approbation and acceptance, and the hope of a fuller participation of his likeness, and everlasting felicity in his presence. And do you not think the fellowship of saints may be as comfortable as that of sinners? or that the conversation of wise and virtuous men is as pleasing, yea, more delightful and entertaining, as well as more edifying, than the society of the wicked and profane, or those who have no sense of religion, and mind the affairs of this world only?

Moreover, the way of virtue will grow more and more easy, pleasant and delightful: and that especially, as virtuous habits strengthen and improve. This well deserves the observation of those, who are discouraged by disadvantageous apprehensions concerning the way of obedience to God's commandments.

Once more, religion, and conformity to its rules and precepts, afford support and comfort under the troubles and afflictions of this life, from which none are exempted: as David says at ver. 165 of this psalm: "Great peace have they that love thy law. And nothing shall offend them."

Upon the whole then, good men, who live in the fear of God all their days, who are upright and conscientious, serious, and truly religious, being conscious of their integrity, and persuaded of the divine favour, and having hopes of a future recompense, have much comfort both in life, and in death: and their way and their condition are preferable to those of other men.

2. Another plea and excuse made by some is to this purpose: we do not intend by any means to persist in sin always: we fully purpose and hope to repent of, and forsake it, before we die. And we have such persuasion of the grace and mercy of God that we believe he will accept of and pardon us, though it be ever so late.

But this plea has been considered and confuted already, in a great measure, under the first head, where we shewed the uncertainty and unlikelihood of repentance, proposed to be made some time hereafter, and consequently the folly and danger of deferring it, and neglecting the present opportunity. With regard to the other part of this plea, the ground of delaying, here insisted upon, "the grace and mercy of God," I now observe these following things.

1.) That this way of arguing is extremely disingenuous. Because God is good and merciful, even to sinners, when they return to him, you encourage yourself in an evil way, and presume to try the utmost of divine patience and mercy: and, as it were, resolve, at the least, that you will allow yourselves, for a long course of time, to multiply transgressions of his laws, and offences against him. Nor do you think of forsaking those ways that are contrary to his will, and displeasing to him, till near the end of life: when health and strength will be impaired by age, or sickness, or accidents: and you are as unfit for the service of God, as of man, and the enjoyments of life have lost all their relish. Is not this very disingenuous? a thought unworthy of a rational being?

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2.) With regard to the extent of the divine mercy, and the hope of sharing in it upon the latest repentance, several things may be observed.

The mercy of God is certainly very great. Nor does it become us to set limits to it. It may be extended to some very late, if sincere penitents. We dare not deny, that whensoever sinners forsake the evil of their ways and their doings, he will have mercy upon them, accept them, and pardon them. Nevertheless none are in more danger of being excluded, than those who in the early days of life are favoured with frequent and earnest calls and invitations, and withstand them. And there are in scripture some declarations and threatenings, which are very awful and affecting. You know, that a peremptory sentence passed upon the whole congregation of the people of Israel, who often repeated their transgressions. "Because," said the Lord, "all those men, which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice: surely they shall not see the land which I promised unto their fathers," Numb. xiv. 22, 23. Which event is improved both by the Psalmist, and the Apostle in the epistle to the Hebrews, as a warning to men, not to provoke the Divine Being by long delays, and repeated acts of disobedience, and to improve the present opportunity, saying: "To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation," Ps. xcv. 7, 8. Heb. iii. and iv. And men are directed by one of the prophets, in this manner: "Seek the Lord, while he may be found. Call ye upon him, while he is near," Is. lv. 6. And very moving are the warnings and expostulations of Wisdom in the book of Proverbs, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, ——and fools hate knowledge——Because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hands, but no man regarded: but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, and will mock, when your fear cometh. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. They shall seek me early;" that is, when distresses and calamities have befallen them; "but they shall not find me. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord," Prov. i. 23—29.

As for the repentance and acceptance of the penitent thief, we do not know when he repented. The crime, for which he suffered, may have been committed by him, and repented of, some while before. Supposing his repentance to be very late, and very sudden, on the day of his death only: his case is altogether singular, on account of his suffering with Jesus. You know, likewise, that the other malefactor repented not, even then. Moreover the penitent gave extraordinary proofs of the sincerity of his repentance: under the pains of crucifixion acknowledging the justice of the punishment he underwent, professing faith in Jesus, and praying to him, in the time of his lowest abasement, when almost all the world rejected him, and the disciples themselves failed, through the weakness of their faith. Above all it should be considered, that there is a great difference between his case and theirs who live under the gospel dispensation. He had not in early life such instructions, such warnings, such calls and invitations, as you have had.

The parable of the labourers hired into the vineyard at the third, sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours of the day, does not relate to the ages of man's life: but rather represents the dispensations of Divine Providence in the several ages of the world. They who were hired at the eleventh hour are the Gentiles, who had been long without the benefit of revelation. Therefore when asked, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" they say, "because no man hath hired us," Matt. xx. 1—16. which shews, that the doctrine of this parable cannot countenance delays in things of religion; or encourage those to expect particular calls and invitations in old age, who have been favoured with such advantages, and neglected them, in the time of their youth.

3. Once more: some may say, we are backward now, in the time of our youth, and the early days of life, to enter upon the ways of religion and virtue, because we fear we shall not persevere. And if we should finally fall away, our guilt would be increased.

To which I answer: you are in the right to be sensible of your own weakness, and the difficulties of a religious course of life. For there are difficulties therein. It is a great undertaking, and should be entered upon with mature consideration. Nevertheless, you have no good reason to defer, or hesitate in your choice. If you are serious and sincere in the undertaking, your progress and perseverance may be reckoned very likely and hopeful.

They who set out in the way of religion with a mixture of worldly views and expectations, may well fall away, if "tribulation, or persecution, ariseth because of the word," Matt. xiii. 21.

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But they who have a true principle of virtue will hold out to the end. "They went out from us," says St. John, "but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us. But they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us," 1 John ii. 19.

Observe the history of the Old and New Testament. And I presume, you will scarce find any instances of total apostacy in men who were once sincerely good, but many examples of early and persevering piety. Abraham immediately obeyed the call of God, and went out, not knowing whither he went. And he continued to give frequent proofs of a strong and lively faith. Isaac and Jacob walked with God all their days. Joseph was an example of early and constant virtue, both in prosperity and adversity. Moses, as soon "as he came to years" of discretion, "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter: choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season," Heb. xi. 23—26. Nor did he ever repent of that choice. Samuel was early dedicated to God, and was eminent for wisdom and piety all his days to old age. Of Obadiah, chief minister to king Ahab, we are informed that he "feared the Lord greatly," 1 Kings xviii. 3. And we know also, that he "feared the Lord from his youth," ver. 12. I might mention Daniel, the three young men his companions, who persevered, notwithstanding great trials: and others, enrolled in the catalogue of worthies, in the epistle to the Hebrews, and elsewhere: famous not for one act of faith only, however eminent and distinguished, but for a course of steady virtue and obedience.

If in the New Testament we meet with some who believed and followed Jesus for a time, and afterwards "went back, and walked no more with him," John vi. 66, it appears evidently, that they went not upon a good foundation at the beginning; but came to Christ with worldly views and expectations. And if it be said of Simon Magus, that he "believed," Acts viii. 13, we know that he never was sincere: "his heart was not right in the sight of God," ver. 21. At the same time, there were churches, or societies of men, the greater part of which were faithful, and persevered under many difficulties and discouragements. The apostles of Christ were for the most part, from the beginning, plain, honest, upright men. And when he called them, they obeyed without delay. And though they had their failings, only one was lost. The rest would not go away: and were, upon the whole, and to the end, an honour to him, and their profession: being persuaded that he "had the words of eternal life," John vi. 68.

You have no reason, therefore, to be disheartened. "By taking heed to God's word, the young may cleanse their way," Ps. cxix. and always keep themselves pure from the pollutions of an evil world. With the use of the appointed means, the spiritual life, once begun, will be maintained. And if you watch and pray, as Christ has directed, you shall be preserved from great temptations, or shall be victorious therein.

III. Let me now propose to you some motives and arguments, inducing to early piety, and immediate compliance with the gracious calls of God.

1. The whole of our time ought to be employed in the service of God. Nor can we in any part of life knowingly and willingly transgress any of God's commandments without contracting guilt. We ought therefore, as soon as we are arrived at any maturity of reason and understanding, to give up ourselves to God, determining to obey all his laws, and to decline every evil thing. And if we are sensible of any acts of disobedience, already done, they should be repented of, and every sin forsaken. The reason of things teaches this.

2. The word of God teaches the same. Addresses are there made to the young, as well as to others. The Jewish people were commanded to "teach their children diligently" the divine laws that had been delivered to them. The design of Solomon in his collection of wise maxims was to "give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and understanding," Prov. i. 4. And children are to be "trained up in the way they should go," ch. xxii. 6. How just is that admonition! "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them," Ecc. xii. 1. And, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might. For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest," ch. ix. 10.

All which shews, that we do not satisfy the law of God, nor answer the end of our being, by some acts of religion near the end of life: but we ought to be truly religious, and serve God all

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the days of our life on earth. We should not, then, content ourselves with a design to be religious hereafter, but resolve to be so now.

3. Consider, how gracious, how affectionate and compassionate are the calls and invitations of God to sinful men. Says Wisdom: "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge! Turn ye at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you," Prov. i. 22, 23. And says God himself by his prophets: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways. For why will ye die, O house of Israel!" Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And our Lord in his preaching: "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. xi. 28—30. And in his state of exaltation: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me," Rev. iii. 20.

How moving, how affecting is this concern for us! And shall any of us resist, and grieve the good Spirit of God, and sin against our own souls?

4. Consider therefore, farther, that by an early dedication of yourselves to God, and serious piety from the beginning, you will prevent a great deal of sin, which you might otherwise be guilty of, and a great deal of sorrow and vexation, which that would occasion here, or hereafter, in this world or another.

5. If you begin to be religious in the early part of life, you will probably be useful in the world, and be the cause of much good, both temporal and spiritual, to many persons. You will promote the happiness of men by kind offices. You may strengthen, encourage, and edify some good men: and may reclaim some sinners by your counsel and example.

6. Early and constant, and persevering piety is very honourable. It is to the advantage of Mnason, that he is called "an old disciple," Acts xxii. 16. St. Paul speaks honourably of some who were in Christ before him," Rom. xvi. 7. He humbles and abases himself when he says: "And last of all he was seen of me, as one born out of due time," 1 Cor. xv. 8. And the "first fruits" of any place "unto Christ, Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16, they and theirs, are sometimes particularly mentioned by him in his epistles, and affectionately recommended to the special regard of others.

7. The coming to a full determination in this point, and turning our feet without delay to God's commandments, will contribute to the comfort and peace of our minds. For we are then fitted for life, and for death; and prepared for all the events of this variable and inconstant state of things. It must be a great advantage to know, and consider this: to be able to view death, and all the evils of life, without terror, or much discomposure of mind.

8. Lastly, they who give themselves up to God in their youth, and serve him faithfully all their days, may hope for some distinguishing honour in the great day of recompense. Indeed some, who set out late, may outgo others that began more early. They excel, it may be, in personal abilities and attainments: by which they are peculiarly qualified for important services in the cause of God and religion. But usually they who begin early, and persevere to the end, will have the advantage.

And may these things be seriously attended to, and considered by all of us! Are we not grieved that some things have been so long deferred? Let us not defer any longer. Let not this present exhortation be slighted, lest we should not have another. Felix and Drusilla once desired to hear Paul of Christ's doctrine, and Felix trembled. But he deferred for that season. And we do not know that he trembled again: or ever gave Paul another opportunity of entering again upon the like argument, Acts xxiv. 24—26.

Let us then beg of God, "to incline our hearts to his testimonies:" and to "teach us his statutes, that we may keep them unto the end."

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SERMON III.

THE SEVERAL BRANCHES OF MORAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

He has shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?—Mich. vi. 8.

In the preceding verses a very important question is proposed: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God?" It is answered in the words of the text. What God chiefly requires of men is, that they "do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with him."

This is the immediate occasion of the words. But I presume it may be useful to take a more extensive and distinct view of the preceding context.

The chapter begins with these words: "Hear ye now, what the Lord saith. Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel," Micah vi. 1, 2.

It is not unusual for God to bespeak the attention of inanimate creatures, and appeal to them for the justice of his proceedings, more emphatically to represent the stupidity and thoughtlessness of men. So by Moses of old: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day. Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak: hear, O earth, the words of my mouth," Deut. iv. 26; xxxii. 1. So also by later prophets: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. For the Lord has spoken: I have nourished up children, and they have rebelled against me," Is. i. 2; see also Ezek. vi. 2, 3.

It follows in the third verse of this chapter: "O my people, what have I done unto thee? And wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me." God condescends by the prophet, to expostulate with the people of Israel. And he gives them leave to come and make their complaints against him, if they had any: and shew their reasons, if they could assign any, why they had forsaken him, neglected his laws, and gone after strange gods.

In Jeremiah are some appeals to the Jewish people very much resembling this: "Thus saith the Lord: What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?" Jer. ii. 5. Again, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel, a land of darkness?" ver. 31.

Ver. 4. "For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants, and I sent before thee Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam."

They had no injuries, or neglects, to complain of. And farther, God reminds them of the benefits he had bestowed upon them, particularly their remarkable deliverance from the bondage of Egypt: when they were brought out thence, and were formed into a distinct nation, and made a great people.

Ver. 5. "Remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord." 'Remember also the consultations and designs of Balak against you, and how Balaam 'was constrained to bless, instead of pronouncing a curse upon you: and that though you were 'then brought into a heinous transgression, you were not utterly cut off and destroyed; but I 'bore with you, and preserved you, until I had brought you into the land of Canaan, and given 'you rest there. Recollect these things, that you may be convinced of my righteousness and 'equity, my mercy and compassion, my fidelity and veracity, in fulfilling the promises I had 'made, and that I have not failed to do you good. You will then perceive, that you have no 'just ground of complaint against me: and that if some desirable blessings are withheld, it 'cannot be owing to want of goodness in me, but it must be rather owing to some failure of

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'duty in you: which is the cause of the evils you suffer, and the ground of the controversy be-'tween us.'

Since the deliverance from the designs of Balak is here so particularly mentioned, as a very remarkable, and eminent proof of the divine regard, it may be worth while to observe, that elsewhere it is also mentioned in a very special manner among other mercies vouchsafed this people in the wilderness. "They hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor, of Pethor, in Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam: but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee," Deut. xxiii. 4, 5. And in another place: "Then Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab arose and warred against Israel: and sent, and called Balaam the son of Beor, to curse you. But I would not hearken unto Balaam. Therefore he blessed you still. So I delivered you out of his hand," Josh. xxiv. 9, 10.

Then, at the sixth verse of this chapter we have these words: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God."

After the foregoing pathetic expostulation with the Jewish people, and the reproof of their ingratitude, they are introduced by the prophet, as anxiously inquisitive, how they might appease the divine displeasure, avert his judgments, and obtain favour and acceptance. If it were requisite, they would bring the most numerous, and the most costly offerings.

"Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?" 'Will God accept 'now of the ordinary sacrifices, such as we offer upon other occasions, and are required in his 'law.'

Ver. 7. "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?" 'Or does he expect a more costly offering, such as our kings have sometimes made 'upon extraordinary occasions? We are ready, if that will be accepted, to offer up thousands 'of rams, and to add in proportion meat-offerings, prepared with oil, though it would amount to 'a very great quantity.'

"Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" 'Or shall we offer up our own children, as some do to appease their deities? We are 'not averse even to this, though the first-born should be demanded.'

The answer is in the text: "He has shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" 'This is the most acceptable service to God. This is preferable to all the sacrifices 'before-mentioned. Let but these things be resolved upon and performed, and the controversy 'is removed: the difference is reconciled and made up: the wrath of God is appeased, and he 'will shew you favour, and bless and prosper you.'

This matter is also farther illustrated in the remaining part of the chapter. "Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights?" ver. 10, 11. It is in vain to think I should be reconciled to those who continue to practise 'fraud and injustice: or that I should approve of and bless those who persist in their idolatrous 'worship.' And thus the chapter concludes: "For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab. And ye walk in their counsels, that I should make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants thereof a reproach," ver. 16. That is, the ordinances and practices of Omri and Ahab, two of the most wicked of their kings, were still observed and followed. And it is plainly declared, that if they persisted therein, their ruin was inevitable.

Such is the context: and in this way, I think, the coherence appears clear and easy.

I now proceed to explain the words of the text. After which I shall add a reflection or two by way of application, and conclude.

I. I begin with a distinct explication of the several particulars in the text.

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good." This some understand, as if the prophet said: "I will shew you," or "God will now shew you by me," giving the following answer to your inquiry.

Others understand the original expression exactly as here rendered in our translation: "He hath shewed thee, O man." Whoever amongst you make this inquiry, if you think and consider, may perceive, that God has already taught you what are the services he requires, and what things are the most acceptable to him. He teaches you by your own reason, if you will

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use it. He has also shewed you this in his word, in the law, and in all the revelations he has made unto you.

So in the law of Moses: "And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul: to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee this day, for thy good?" Deut. x. 12, 13. Again: "For this commandment, which I command thee this day: it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up to heaven for us, and bring it to us?——But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See I have set before thee life and death," ch. xxx. 11, 12.

And the particulars, here insisted on, are but the sum and substance of the ten laws, or precepts, delivered with so much solemnity at mount Sinai.

And many of the prophets speak in perfect agreement the same with what is here said in Micah. So in Isaiah: "Wash ye, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed——Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Is. i. 16, 17. And in Hosea: "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice: and the knowledge of the Lord more than burnt-offerings," Hos. vi. 6.

Therefore what is here said had been before, and often taught, and shewn to this people by reason, and by other prophets and messengers. But God now reminds them of it, and shews it them again by this prophet.

"He hath shewed thee what is good," or right: what is in itself reasonable and excellent, useful and profitable.

"He hath shewed thee, O man," whosoever thou art, that makest this inquiry, and art desirous of satisfaction, "what is good." "And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

These particulars need not to be much enlarged upon. You have often heard them discoursed of. A brief explication therefore of these words, reminding you of what you know already, will suffice.

The several branches of our duty are sometimes reduced in scripture to the "love of God, and our neighbour." At other times they are ranged under three general heads. St. Paul says: "The grace of God has appeared to all men, teaching us, that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," Tit. ii. 12.

The order, likewise, in which these general branches are mentioned, is varied. Our Lord says, that the love of God is the "first and great commandment." And in the law of Moses, written on two tables, the duties immediately respecting God are first placed. But in this text it is first said, we should "do justly, and love mercy:" then, "walk humbly with God." And in the place just cited from Paul, "living godly" is mentioned last.

But the order is of little moment. For these several branches of duty can never be separated. And our Saviour having said, that "to love the Lord our God with all the heart and with all the soul is the first and great commandment," presently adds: "and the second is like unto it: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," Matt. xxii. 37—39. And St. John says: "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen; how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him: that he who loveth God, love his brother also," 1 John iv. 20, 21.

The duty of sobriety is not particularly mentioned in this text of Micah: it is also omitted elsewhere, when our duty is summarily comprehended in the love of God and our neighbour. But it is always supposed or implied, though not expressly mentioned. For without it we cannot perform any part of worship and service to God in a reasonable and acceptable manner. And divers instances of intemperance are social, and directly injurious to our neighbour: and others lead to unrighteousness. A prevailing love of this world, an inordinate affection for earthly things, covetousness, and ambition, are inconsistent both with the love of God, and our neighbour.

"What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly?" This comprehends every thing

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that is fair and equal between man and man, according to the relations they bear, or the obligations they are under to each other.

In this chapter, presently after the text, God by his prophet reproves divers things contrary to this branch of duty: without amending of which unrighteous conduct, they could never hope to be accepted of him. "Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and the bag of deceitful weights? For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth."

We are to be just in our dealings with men, without imposing on their ignorance or credulity by unfair artifices or falsehood.

As in our common traffic with men we are to observe truth in our words, so upon all other occasions are we to regard the truth of things: not saying any thing falsely to the disparagement of our neighbour, which would be as manifest an injustice as the most injurious action.

We are also sincerely to purpose and design what we promise: and should to the utmost of our power endeavour to be as good as our word.

We are to be faithful in all the trusts reposed in us, according to the tenour of them, and the will and intention of those who confide in us.

We should likewise diligently and prudently provide for those who are under our care, and depend upon us: as we ought cheerfully and honestly to yield subjection, and obedience, and all fidelity to our superiors and governors, who afford us maintenance, or protection and security.

It follows next, "and to love mercy," or goodness, and beneficence. When the duty owing to our neighbour is summarily described by loving him, then both justice and mercy are summarily included in that one word. Here they are mentioned separately, and distinctly: and in like manner elsewhere: "Therefore turn thee to thy God. Keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually," Hos. xii. 6. Our Lord pronounceth a woe on the pharisees who had omitted judgment, mercy, faith, or fidelity.

Indeed, shewing mercy is doing no more to others, than what we in like circumstances would that others should do unto us.

However, it takes in several things, which do not immediately appear to be binding in point of strict justice: as providing for, or relieving not only our own relatives, or friends, or such as have laid us under obligations, but strangers likewise, if we have power to do it.

Herein is included not only doing what men can strictly claim of us, but something more than that: some acts of kindness and beneficence: foregoing and quitting our right: and not exacting rigorously our whole due.

It includes the guiding and counselling such as are unexperienced, and setting out in the world: accommodating them out of our substance, that they may enlarge their dealings, and better secure a comfortable maintenance for themselves and their families, and live with credit, and be useful in the world: giving time to those who are indebted to us: speaking favourably of other men, and not aggravating every instance of imprudence, or misbehaviour, into an act of heinous, wilful and premeditated wickedness: pitying and helping those who are in straits, according to the best of our power: though their straits are not entirely owing to unforeseen accidents, or to the violence or unrighteousness of others, but partly to their own indiscretion, or negligence, or even extravagance.

It is also a part of mercy to extend our views of usefulness, and to plead the cause of the injured and oppressed: and endeavour to deliver them out of the hands of such as are mightier than they, who have greater power and influence, or more art and management, than most of their neighbours.

These, and many other instances of mercy there are, which we may be called to. And to neglect, or omit them, when they are in our power, and we have an opportunity of being serviceable to the injured, is very unkind: it is unmerciful, it is not doing as we would be done unto.

When Job vindicates himself from the charges brought against him, he insists not only upon his innocence, but alledges likewise instances of generosity and usefulness to others. "I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. I was

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eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. The cause which I knew not I searched out, I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth," Job xxix. 12, 15, 16.

And you know, that there are many such exhortations propounded to Christians in the New Testament: that "every man should look not on his own things only, but on those of others also: that they should rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep: that they should bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

But I shall not farther multiply precepts and directions of this kind, nor instance in any other cases, which the course of things will present to us; and he who is of a merciful and generous disposition will take notice of, and act accordingly. I shut up this article therefore with those words of Isaiah containing a description of the different temper and conduct of base and narrow, indeed wicked minds, and of such as are truly generous, and public spirited. "For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord," that is, to pronounce false judgments, which are contrary to the express command of God in his law: "to make empty the soul of the hungry, and to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. The instruments also of the churl are evil. He deviseth wicked devices, to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right. But the liberal," the merciful, the generous, the bountiful "man, deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he be established," Is. xxxii. 6—8.

The last thing in this text, said to be required of men, is "to walk humbly with God:" or, as the Hebrew is, literally, "and to humble thyself to walk with thy God. In the ancient Greek version, made before the coming of our Saviour, it is rendered: "and be ready to walk with thy God." The meaning, I presume, in the general, is: 'and to resolve to obey all God's 'commandments, and to continue and persevere therein always to the end of life.'

I shall briefly mention several particulars comprehended in this article.

First, it is to resolve to worship the true God, and him alone. In the text it is the Lord thy God: meaning the God that has made us, and preserves us: the God that has dealt bountifully with us, who has supplied and provided for us, who has helped and delivered us in times of danger and difficulty.

This, certainly, is one thing intended by the prophet: to engage the people of Israel, according to the commandment of the law, as well as the dictates of reason, to fear the Lord their God, and serve him only: even God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, who had brought them out of the house of servants, and had ever since conferred upon them many favours and benefits.

Secondly, it includes a respect to all God's commandments, and a readiness to submit to his authority in all things, without any exception.

Thirdly, this humbling ourselves to walk with God, or walking humbly with the Lord our God, includes dependence on him, trusting in him, and committing ourselves to him: believing, and hoping, that he will continue to protect and defend us, and afford us all those things which are needful and convenient.

Fourthly, it includes contentment with our state, and worshipping and serving God in a time of affliction and trouble, as well as in a day of ease and prosperity: blessing him not only when he gives, but also when he takes away: and acknowledging the wisdom and the righteousness of all his dealings with us.

This is implied in devoting ourselves to his service. Under the former particular I mentioned dependence upon God, and committing ourselves to him. This contentment under afflictions, now mentioned, when they befall us, in the course of divine providence, is acting and exercising that dependence which we have made a profession of, and performing according to the engagements we have entered into.

Fifthly, to walk with God includes continuance and perseverance in the service of God, and obedience to his holy laws and commandments, throughout the whole of our life, notwithstanding the temptations we may meet with, and though others should prove false to their engagements, and forsake the Lord their God.

Sixthly, it includes serving God with a lowly humble apprehension of ourselves: considering the sins we have been guilty of, the defects of our obedience, the imperfections of the services we perform for the honour of his name, or the good of others: and that when we have acted according to the best of our ability, we have done no more than our duty, and what we were

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under many obligations to perform: and humbly and thankfully owning the goodness of God in the encouragements he has given us, and the promises he has made of accepting our sincere obedience, and rewarding it greatly beyond its merit.

II. I shall now add a word or two by way of application, and conclude.

1. We perceive, that the holy obedience, required of us, is of great extent: comprehending justice, mercy, and piety, with the several branches of each. It can therefore be no very easy thing to be truly religious. It must be a difficult, and an high attainment. We have need, as our Lord directs, to strive, to exert ourselves, and do our utmost, to "enter in at the strait gate." One came to our Lord, desirous to know what he should do that "he might obtain eternal life," and saying, that "he had kept all the commandments from his youth." But Jesus perceived that "he lacked one thing," Matt. xix. And the event shewed, that his heart was governed by an inordinate love of this present world: and that he was not disposed to do all that is requisite to secure riches in heaven. Let us consider, and examine ourselves, whether this be our case.

2. Let us seriously attend to this representation of true religion, and remember, that the things here insisted on are of absolute necessity.

There is no making up the controversy between God and sinful men, but by repentance and amendment, or a return to real, and universal virtue and piety.

The displeasure of God is not to be appeased by costly oblations. But repent, and turn to the Lord with all the heart unfeignedly: break off every sinful course: cease to do evil, and learn to do well: seek judgment, love mercy, humble yourselves before the Lord your God: and take upon you the obligation of his reasonable and excellent laws and commandments: then he will receive you graciously, and love you freely. All your sins shall be blotted out: they shall be as if they never were. They will be remembered against you no more.

And all this is of absolute necessity; nothing else will avail for our acceptance. We cannot substitute any thing else in the room of true virtue and goodness. Long abstinence, painful mortifications of the body at certain seasons, will not suffice: nor some short transports of devotion, however warm and lively: nor any zeal for the externals of religion, or for the right faith, and for spreading the principles of religion in the world. Nothing but a regular course of sincere and undissembled virtue in the several branches of righteousness, mercy and piety, can recommend us to the favour and acceptance of a wise and holy God.

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body, for the sin of my soul?"

Or, shall I fast twice in the week, and pay tithes of all that I possess?"

Shall I confess my sins once, or twice, or every month in the year, to a person in holy orders, and submit to all the bodily pains and penances he appoints?

Shall I increase the number and length of my prayers to a double, or treble proportion more than ordinary? and hear, or read over an abundance of sermons, and other treatises of religion?

Shall I erect a costly and magnificent edifice, wherein men may meet, and unite together in the worship of the great God and King of the world?

The point is already resolved. Natural reason and divine revelation agree in one and the same answer to this solicitous and important inquiry. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?"

I have now explained the words of the text, and added an inference or two by way of reflection. But I propose to discourse again upon this subject, and farther shew the nature and extent, the excellence and importance of virtue, or moral righteousness.

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SERMON IV.

THE NATURE, EXCELLENCE, AND IMPORTANCE OF MORAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah vi. 8.

I HAVE already shewn the coherence, and distinctly explained the several particulars in the text. It will not be unsuitable to this portion of scripture, if we proceed to consider, in a more general way, the nature, extent, and obligation of virtue. In doing this I shall observe the following method.

I. I will endeavour to shew the nature and extent of virtue, or moral righteousness.

II. I shall shew the excellence and importance of virtue, or righteousness and true holiness.

III. After which I shall conclude with some inferences in the way of application.

But I do not intend a discourse, or dissertation, upon this subject, containing abstruse and profound notions, for the entertainment of metaphysical minds, and such as have thought, or read much concerning these matters, and have penetrated far into the speculative points of religion. But my intention is to explain this matter, so far as I am able, in a clear and intelligible way, for the sake of meaner capacities, and such as are but little acquainted with these points.

For one main reason of this design is, that I have been apprehensive, that we, in the modern language of our ordinary discourses, frequently using expressions not found in scripture, are not understood by all: and that, whereas we often lay a much greater stress upon some things than others, when these also are commanded by the Divine Being; the reason of this is not perceived, though such conduct be perfectly agreeable to the scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

My aim therefore is to set this matter in a clear light, in a few words, that we may be the better understood in our ordinary discourses, without repeated explications of the phrases and expressions made use of.

I. I begin with some observations concerning virtue, or moral righteousness.

1. Morality always supposes rational, intelligent, and free beings. In order to any action being morally good or evil, it must be the act of a being capable of distinguishing things, and of choosing or refusing. Such a being, or agent, we suppose man to be. We perceive ourselves to have the powers of thinking, understanding, reasoning, choosing or refusing. And the scripture always supposeth these powers in man. God says to sinful men by his prophets: "Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions: so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye," Ezek. xviii. 30—32. And Moses reminded the people, who had been long under his care, and to whom he had with divine authority delivered a system of laws: "See, I have set before thee life and good, and death and evil——I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that thou mayest live," Deut. xxx. 15—20. And our Lord said to the Jews, his hearers: "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life," John v. 40.

2. The word, morality, is used in two senses: the one more restrained, the other more comprehensive. In the restrained sense of the word are included sobriety, justice, equity, goodness, and mercy; or the duties more especially respecting ourselves, and other men, our neighbours. In the more enlarged and comprehensive meaning of the word are included not only the duties just mentioned, but likewise the duties owing to God.

This comprehensive sense of these terms and expressions, morality, virtue, moral righteousness, as including all the necessary duties of a rational being, I take to be the more proper sense and meaning of the terms, as they are generally used by wise and knowing persons.

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I suppose this to be evident from these two considerations: first, that we often speak of the moral perfections of God, as distinguished from natural. And when we do so, by his moral perfections we mean every kind of perfection that is virtuous and righteous, or the whole rectitude of the divine will. Secondly, when we speak of moral righteousness, or obedience to rules of moral virtue, as distinct from positive appointments, and a ritual, ceremonial righteousness or holiness; we must mean our duty to God, as well as to ourselves and other men: or all virtue, and every duty, which has a foundation in the reason of things.

These two considerations, I think, evidently shew, that this is a common sense of the word. And as the love of God and our neighbour is comprehended in morality, or that which we call moral good, so the contrary is moral evil: living in the neglect of any duty toward God or man, or the transgression of any reasonable law or commandment, regulating and prescribing such duty.

The design of this observation is to shew the sense of some terms and expressions made use of concerning this matter.

We are next to observe the nature of morality: or to shew, wherein moral good, moral righteousness, or virtue consists, and how it may be known and discerned.

3. The things, said to be morally good, are such as are fit and reasonable in themselves, according to the case and circumstances which any being is in, and the relations he bears to others. To mention some instances. It is, and appears to be, fit and reasonable, that a rational and intelligent being should preserve the use and exercise of his rational powers, and not lose the government of himself by excess and intemperance, or by any passions and affections, excited by external things, whether good or evil.

It is also fit and becoming, that rational creatures should, according to their abilities, humbly praise and adore the Author of their being: acknowledging the power, wisdom and goodness, of which they see manifold proofs and traces in themselves, and in all things around them: and that they should be thankful to him for all his benefits, and fear and reverence him, and acquiesce in his disposals.

It is likewise fit and reasonable in itself, that these rational, intelligent beings should bear good will and kind affection to one another: as they all share in the like powers and benefits, and are all exposed to the like casualties, weaknesses, and wants, and are dependent upon each other.

All these things appear on the first view to be fit and reasonable. Moreover moral good and evil are known by their tendencies. All the things just mentioned are beneficial, conducive to the perfection, and the happiness of individuals and societies. And the things contrary to them are, and appear to be evil, inasmuch as they weaken those who allow of them, and are detrimental to others around them.

We may here observe farther, that it is in itself fit and reasonable, that God, the one eternal being, perfect and happy in himself, if he form a world, or worlds of beings, should concern himself for them, provide for them, and overrule and direct all things with wisdom, righteousness and goodness.

Thus then, virtue, or moral righteousness, is, and appears to be, in itself fit and reasonable, and has a tendency to promote the happiness of particular beings, and of societies.

1. This fitness and reasonableness of things is itself an obligation; or lays an obligation upon every rational being by whom it is perceived. For whatever is fit, reasonable, and equitable, must be right, and the contrary wrong. He therefore that does what is fit, reasonable, and equitable, and which he discerns to be right, approves himself, and his conduct, and his satisfaction therein. He that does otherwise, knows he has done wrong: and, if he reflect, will condemn himself.

5. Beside the forementioned obligation, (of intrinsic fitness and reasonableness) there is another, arising from the will of God, the creator and the governor of the universe, and particularly of his rational creatures. These fitnesses of things, before-mentioned, are a rule of action to the Deity himself. And it must be his will, that the fitness, or reason of things should be observed by his rational creatures: or that they should do those things which are conducive to their own, and each other's welfare.

And when it is considered, that moral good is the will of God, and moral evil contrary to his will; even to the will of him who is supreme, and Lord of all; it is reasonable to conclude, that he should bestow rewards or inflict punishments, either now immediately, or hereafter in some future time, upon those who observe or neglect the reason of things and the welfare of

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their fellow-creatures: that is, who obey, or transgress the law of nature: which is also the law of God, the author of nature.

6. Virtue, morality, or moral righteousness, is a thing of great extent, comprehending every thing that is in itself fit and reasonable: men's duty to God and to each other: the duties of every relation, and the due regulation of thoughts and affections, as well as outward actions.

For in the more ordinary and just sense of the expression, as before shewn, it takes in every thing that is fit and reasonable: and therefore must include honourable sentiments, as well as outward worship, and reverential expressions concerning the Deity. It requires likewise kind affections, as well as good offices to men. It comprehends not only strict justness, but goodness, and mercy, and equity: yea forgiveness of injuries and offences, when acknowledged. For this also is fit in a world of creatures, that are weak and fallible, and often offend against each other, through mistake, or passion.

This law of nature, or reason, does moreover teach repentance to all those who offend. For, since virtue is right, as before shewn, he who has transgressed, and done what is wrong, must turn from his course, and amend it. It is the only way of becoming good, and of being accepted in the sight of the holy, wise and impartial Sovereign and Judge of all.

7. It is commonly said of the law of nature, that it is of eternal obligation: but yet I would add, that every branch of moral righteousness cannot be practised in every state.

The law of reason, I say, is of eternal obligation: that is, supposing such cases and circumstances, or beings, to bear such and such relations to each other; such and such actions will be always obligatory. Supposing a world, in which there are parents and children, masters and servants, rich and poor, some in prosperous, others in afflictive circumstances, some governors, others governed, and a great variety of other circumstances subsisting: such and such a behaviour toward each other is fit and reasonable. And though there be no such beings, with those several relations; yet it is true, that if there were such beings, such actions would be in themselves fit and reasonable. Nor can any authority dissolve, and set aside their obligation.

Thus these things are of everlasting obligation. But when those relations and circumstances cease, divers branches of duty must cease also. So in a future state of recompense, for such as have been truly and sincerely good in this world, many branches of duty, necessary here, will cease. Where there is perfect holiness, and perfection of happiness, there cannot be the exercise of forgiveness to offenders, nor of mercy to the miserable. Nor will there be room for patience under afflictions, and such like virtues which are necessary in this state of frailty: though still the love of God, and the love of each other, the great and essential virtues with branches suitable to a state of glory and happiness, will be always fit, and reasonable, and incumbent upon every one.

8. The duties of moral obligation are discernible by rational beings with a due exercise of their powers and faculties. For those duties being founded in the powers and circumstances of those very beings themselves, and their relations to each other, and being therefore fit and reasonable in themselves; they may be discerned by such as exercise their reason, and attend to the nature, and circumstances of things.

There may be perplexed cases, when what is duty, what is best and fittest cannot be determined without some difficulty: and the evidence of what is right amounts to no more than probability, or is short of certainty. But the general obligations of virtue, the great branches of duty toward God and men, are discernible by such as think sedately and maturely, as the importance of the thing deserves.

It is reasonable to think it should be so. And the Scriptures teach the same. For St. Paul says: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them: for God has shewed it unto them." He is speaking of the heathens, who had not the benefit of revelation. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead. So that they are without excuse: because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened," Rom. i. 19—21. And afterwards: "For when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves: who shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another," ch. ii. 14, 15.

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9. We now perceive the difference between moral precepts, and ritual, ceremonial ordinances and appointments. Moral precepts are fit and reasonable in themselves. They are always obligatory, and are discernible by reason. But none of those properties belong to ritual, or ceremonial ordinances, of which there were many in the law of Moses, concerning bodily purifications, certain attendances at Jerusalem, numerous sacrifices, and the like: and under the gospel-dispensation, baptism and the eucharist. To these, I say, do not belong the fore-mentioned properties. They are not fit and reasonable in themselves. They are not always obligatory. They may be set aside, and others appointed in their room. Nor can they be discerned by reason. For their obligation depends upon express or positive appointment. I shall illustrate this by two instances only.

It was fit that the people of Israel should remember, and be thankful for, their deliverance from Egyptian bondage: but the duty to celebrate a memorial of it by eating the paschal lamb, owed all its obligation to divine appointment: and another method of commemorating that deliverance might have been ordained.

So likewise, supposing the coming of Christ, and his teaching in Judea, and dying, as he did, and rising again: this great transaction, and particularly the great event of his death, should be thankfully remembered by his disciples and followers: but the way of commemorating it, by eating bread and drinking wine, is of divine determination, and obligatory only by positive appointment.

10. The duties of morality, or moral righteousness, are taught and learned two ways, by reason and revelation. They are taught by reason, as before shewn, being fit and equitable in themselves, and appearing so to such as exercise their rational faculties. They may be also taught and enforced by revelation: as we know they are in the Old and the New Testament, by Moses and the prophets, by Jesus Christ and his apostles.

11. Though several expressions and phrases, made use of by us in discoursing on these points are different from those which we find in scripture, yet there also the same things are said and taught.

We do not find in scripture the words morality and immorality, moral good and evil: very seldom that of virtue, never that of vice. These expressions are chiefly taken from Greek and Roman authors: and owe their original and use, in good measure, to the different way of learning these principles, by reason, rather than revelation.

The word virtue is indeed sometimes found in the New Testament; but yet very rarely in the sense we now use it in, for holiness in general, or every branch of good conduct in itself reasonable and excellent. In one place it seems to be so used by St. Paul, in an exhortation to the Philippians: "If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things," Philip. iv. 8. As if he had said: and whatever else is virtuous, really good and excellent, and praise-worthy, think of it, and attend to it.

And St. Peter in his first epistle: "But ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people,—— that you should shew forth the praises," literally, virtues, "of him, who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Pet. ii. 9. But though the original word signifies, literally, virtues; it does not exactly answer to our use of it: and seems to be well enough rendered in our translation, praises.

Again, in the second epistle of the same apostle——"through the knowledge of him who has called us to glory and virtue," 2 Pet. i. 3. But this text would be more properly rendered: "through the knowledge of him who has called us by glory and power," or by his glorious power. Here virtue is equivalent to power. And the meaning is, that God had brought us to partake in the privileges of his church by a glorious display and manifestation of his power in supporting and spreading the gospel.

Once more, in the same context: "And beside these, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge," ver. 5. "But here it is evident, that virtue does not signify all virtuous conduct in general, but is put for some one virtue, or good disposition only. It seems to be used in the restrained sense of fortitude, courage, or resolution in the profession of the truth.

There is therefore scarce any text in the New Testament, where the word virtue is used in the general sense, of whatever is virtuous, and excellent, or in itself reasonable; except that one place of St. Paul, before cited from the epistle to the Philippians.

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But though several terms and phrases, now used by us in speaking of these matters, are not found in scripture, the same things are there said, and there are equivalent expressions. Righteousness sometimes includes both justice and goodness, and even piety likewise. And then it is the same as virtue, or morality, or moral righteousness. Says the Psalmist: "A little that a righteous man has," that is, a good, or virtuous man, "is better than the riches of many wicked," Ps. xxxvii. 16. And, "the righteous Lord loveth righteousness: his countenance does behold the upright," Ps. xi. 7. And in the like manner, very often.

And though we do not find the words virtue and vice, moral good and evil: yet the scripture often speaks of good and evil, such good and evil as are really and intrinsically so: by which the characters of men are distinguished, rather than by the observation of any positive appointments and ritual ordinances. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices, saith the Lord——Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me——Wash you, make ye clean. Put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well——Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed." Is. i. 11, 17. In another place: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter," Is. v. 23. Our text speaks of justice, mercy and piety, as good: that is, intrinsically so; good, in a superior degree to all the sacrifices and oblations before-mentioned.

The design of the gospel dispensation is represented after this manner: "that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life," Luke i. 74, 75. In holiness and righteousness, that is, in a righteous holiness: as kingdom and glory is glorious kingdom: life and immortality is immortal life. So here, holiness and righteousness is a righteous holiness or sanctity: or in modern language, the practice of virtue, or moral righteousness. For there is a ritual, ceremonial, legal holiness or sanctity, consisting in a conformity to ritual precepts, the ordinances and appointments of positive law. But the design of the coming of Christ is here, agreeably to innumerable other texts of the New Testament, represented to be, that we might serve God in a righteous sanctity, or the practice of real holiness. There is a like expression in the epistle to the Ephesians: "That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 24.

And by the prophets, men were often called upon in such expressions as these: "Amend your ways and your doings," Jer. vii. 3; and, "Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good," ch. xviii. 11, and, "Amend now your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God," ch. xxvi. 13. Which is exactly the same as that they should amend their manners, and return to the sincere practice of virtue, or moral righteousness.

Though therefore we do not find in the scripture all the same words and phrases which are now frequently made use of by us in treating on this subject: yet the same things are there said, and there are also equivalent, or like expressions with those made use of in modern language.

SERMON V.

THE NATURE, EXCELLENCE, AND IMPORTANCE OF MORAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah vi. 8.

HAVING explained these words, I endeavoured in a late discourse, to shew in several propositions the nature and extent of virtue, or moral righteousness.

II. I am now to shew the excellence and importance of virtue, or righteousness and true holiness.

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1. This righteousness, as to the main parts of it, has a place in every state and condition: or is of constant, perpetual and everlasting obligation: as has been already shewn, it being fit and reasonable in itself. This is one reason why St. Paul gives the preference to charity or love above faith and hope, that the virtue, or principle of love, will subsist even in the future state: whereas the other two, though very reasonable and beneficial now, will entirely cease, and be no more, when the objects of present faith and hope are possessed and enjoyed. "Charity," says he, "never fails." But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail: whether there be tongues, they shall cease: whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." The way and manner of knowing here is so slow and tedious: the knowledge, we attain in this state, is so defective and inadequate, that he scruples not to say, "it shall vanish away:" and concludes: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity. But the greatest of these is charity."

2. Moral perfection, or righteousness, is the glory and perfection of God himself: consequently, it must be the chief excellence of all rational beings. I say, moral perfection is the glory and perfection of God himself. Hereby he is truly excellent and amiable: forasmuch as beside his power, knowledge and understanding, he is a being of unvariable truth, everlasting righteousness, inflexible equity, and abundant goodness. When Moses desired to see God, the divine glory and character were represented to him after this manner: "The Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed: The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Exod. xxxiv. 6. The Psalmist observes: "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness: his countenance does behold the upright," Ps. xi. 7. And in another place: "Rejoice before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness will he judge the world, and the people with equity," Ps. xcviii. 9. In one of the prophets it is written: "Let him that glorieth, glory in this; that he knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth." "For in these things do I delight, saith the Lord," Jer. ix. 24. Our blessed Lord recommends it to us, "to be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect," Mat. v. 48; that is, to imitate him in truth, righteousness, and goodness: to aim at a holiness resembling the holiness of God. And, says St. Paul: "That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 24.

This clearly shews the excellence of real holiness, that is the perfection of the divine nature: and that by becoming truly holy, we gain a resemblance of God himself.

3. The excellence and importance of real holiness, or moral righteousness, are evident from the frequent declarations in scripture concerning its absolute necessity to our acceptance with God, and our obtaining the heavenly inheritance. We have seen at large, how the necessity of this holiness to acceptance with God, is represented in this text and context. In the New Testament, where future recompences are more insisted on, it is plainly declared, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. And "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And "he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, as he is pure."

4. Virtue, or true holiness, is represented in scripture as the end of all ordinances, and of all the revelations of God's will made to mankind. "Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. And "for this purpose was the Son of God manifested, to take away our sins," and "to destroy the works of the devil," 1 John iii. 8. Through the knowledge of Christ, God has "given us all things conducive "to life and godliness," or suited to promote a godly life: that we might "be partakers of the divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. And St. Paul expressly says, that "Charity is the end of the commandment," 1 Tim. i. 5.

5. This farther appears from the earnestness with which true holiness is recommended in every part of the word of God; and from the preference which is constantly given to such holiness above obedience to ritual ordinances. This is evident to every one who is at all acquainted with the scriptures.

God himself says, he "desired mercy, and not sacrifice: and the knowledge of himself, more than burnt offerings," Hos. vi. 6.

The several branches of moral righteousness are the things principally insisted on by our blessed Lord in that which is called his sermon on the mount. The like things are also earnestly recommended to Christians in the latter part of all the apostolical epistles.

Our Lord declared, the love of God and our neighbour, and not ritual ordinances and ap-

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pointments, to be the sum and substance of the law and prophets. Matt. xxii. 40. It is also the sum of his own doctrine, and of the preaching and writings of his apostles.

From all which particulars we evidently discern the excellence and importance of virtue, moral righteousness, or righteousness and true holiness.

III. I shall now conclude with some inferences by way of application.

1. We hence perceive the ground of the preference which is always given by wise men, and by the scriptures, to righteousness and true holiness above obedience to positive precepts, or ritual appointments. The obligation of these is founded in the will of God: but the former are reasonable in themselves, having a real excellence. And besides, they are also the will and commandment of God: and his will more especially, above, and in preference to all other laws and commandments.

2. We perceive also why men's characters are chiefly determined by the practice of virtue and true holiness, or the contrary; and why future rewards and punishments are to be dispensed accordingly. As our Lord declares, "the wicked will go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal," Matt. xiii. 49; xxv. 46. So it will be. And we now perceive, why it must, and should be so. The righteous have fulfilled the will of God, and performed that obedience which was the end of positive appointments, the others not. The righteous, the virtuous, have acted right, with sincerity, in their state of trial. They have attained some resemblance of the divine nature, and some preparedness for the heavenly state, of which the others are destitute.

3. What has been said upon this argument may be of use to shew the mistake of those who despise, and speak lightly of morality. Possibly, they do not thereby mean the same thing which those do who magnify it and earnestly recommend it. But they should consider that morality, in its more proper sense and meaning, is not merely honesty in the traffick and commerce of this world; nor is it only outward action. But virtue, or morality, in its comprehensive meaning, as before observed, takes in the love of God and our neighbour, or every thing that is fit and reasonable in itself. Its laws and precepts regulate thoughts, as well as outward actions. It is true holiness. It is the image of God in man: it is a meetness for the rewards and happiness of another life.

4. We may conclude from what has been said upon this subject, that the promoting of virtue, or righteousness and true holiness, or a right moral conduct, will be one great design of any revelation that comes from God: forasmuch as these things are truly excellent, and useful in their natural and genuine tendency. And since these things are always obligatory, it is very probable, that one great design of revelation will be to perfect men in virtue, or moral righteousness, to encourage and enforce that righteousness by new and powerful motives and arguments, and to deter men from the contrary unrighteousness. And, as before observed, we do evidently perceive this to be the great design, the sum and substance of the law, the historical writings, the book of Job, the Psalms and Prophets of the Old, and of the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles of the New Testament.

5. He that has some just sentiments of God, and a serious regard to moral obligations, is in a great measure fitted and prepared for revelation. For he must be disposed to pay a regard to one who speaks in the name of God, and gives proof of a divine commission by works of mighty power, and teaches a doctrine enforcing real holiness. This is what our Lord declares when he says: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine; whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself," John vii. 17. And when one had acknowledged, "that there is one God, and that to love the Lord with all the heart, and his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices;" he declared, that he was "not far from the kingdom of God." Mark xii. 32—34. This is what he teaches also, when he says: "No man can come unto me, except the Father which has sent me draw him:" and, "every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me," John vi. 44, 45.

6. From what has been said, it appears to be a dreadful thing for any man to lessen the obligation of virtue and true holiness, or moral righteousness: or to abate men's regard thereto by any means whatever, or with a view to any particular and favourite scheme of his own, or of other men's invention. Our blessed Lord has declared, that such "shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 19. And he freely reproved the scribes and pharisees, who

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taught for doctrine the commandments of men, and made void the law of God by traditions, which they received, and recommended, Matt. xv. 16.

7. We are likewise carefully to avoid misrepresentations of the Divine Being, and to be very cautious of admitting any principles derogatory to the moral perfection and righteousness of God, the creator and the governor of the world. We are not only to be concerned for the honour of God, as perfect in knowledge and power: but we should also maintain his moral perfection, as a being perfectly true, righteous, good, merciful. Are these perfections in some men? Would men want what is their greatest glory and excellence, if they should be arbitrary and unequal? And can we suppose the divine government to want justice and equity? Are great and good men merciful and forgiving? And can we deny those properties to God, the source of all being and perfection? It is easy to observe, that in scripture the greatness and majesty, and the goodness and mercy of God, are often joined together. "Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity: I dwell in the high and holy place: with him also, who is of a humble and contrite spirit——For I will not contend for ever. Neither will I be always wroth. For the spirit should fail before me, and the souls that I have made," Is. lvii. 15, 16. And Elihu strongly argues: "Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity——Yea surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment," Job. xxxiv. 10, 12.

8. We may hence infer the difficulty of describing particularly and exactly the services and enjoyments of good men in the heavenly state. They will be then perfect in holiness, and complete in happiness. Consequently a love of God and our fellow-creatures will abide, and be in great perfection. But many branches, various exercises of virtue, necessary and reasonable on earth, can have no place in heaven, where we are to be as the angels of God.

Particular descriptions therefore of the future happiness of good men, however agreeable and entertaining, will be for the most part conjectural and uncertain. We know enough from reason and scripture, to fill us with great hopes and expectations, and inspire us with the utmost zeal and diligence in perfecting holiness. The future happiness is, we know, the perfection of soul and body: it is freedom from all the imperfections of this condition. It is immortality, everlasting life, a glorious kingdom, a crown of glory that fadeth not away, an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, reserved in heaven. We are then to see God, and to be like unto Jesus Christ. But it is observable, that neither Jesus Christ, nor his apostles, have delivered particular and precise representations and descriptions of the glories of the other world, or of the services and enjoyments of good men therein. And St. Paul, who was caught up into the "third heaven and paradise," 2 Cor. xii. 3—5, absolutely declines a representation of the things he had seen and heard, and considers them as unspeakable.

9. By what has been said we may be led in some measure to the knowledge and understanding of those words of St. Paul: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. And when all things shall be subdued under him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all," 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

Notwithstanding these expressions of the apostle, certainly Jesus Christ, the second Adam, will continue to be the head of his church and people, and the glory of the human nature, and will in all things have the pre-eminence, 1 Cor. xv. 45. There will for ever be given to him honour, respect, and gratitude, for what he has done for us. His people will be with him. And his presence with them will be a main source of their happiness. For, as St. Paul says: "So shall we ever be with the Lord," 1 Thes. iv. 17. And our Lord prayed, saying: "Father, I will, that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me," John xvii. 24.

The meaning of that passage I apprehend to be this: that the design of Christ's undertaking is then accomplished. And as the motives and arguments taken from his life on earth, from his death, resurrection, and ascension, were especially suited to a state of weakness and imperfection, temptation and affliction: those motives and considerations will then in a great measure cease. And the people and followers of Jesus, brought to a state of perfection, will for the future be entirely governed by the reason of things, and the will of God. Yet still they will be for ever thankful for the gospel dispensation, and for all the condescension and humiliation of the

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Lord Jesus, and for his after exaltation: by which their hearts were won to God, and they were established, and upheld in the practice of virtue, under all the difficulties they met with here, until they were brought to glory.

10. Though duties of moral obligation have the preference above others, yet positive appointments, of divine authority, are not to be omitted or neglected. These also have their use, and are expedient in the present state of things. They were wisely appointed, and therefore ought to be submitted to and obeyed. It is our Lord's own determination upon the point: "These ought ye to have done:" meaning the weightier matters of the law; "and not to leave the other undone," Luke xi. 42.

11. Finally, let us not rest satisfied with observing positive appointments, or with any external performances, or the profession of the principles of religion, or a partial obedience: but let us sincerely do the whole will of God, so far as we are acquainted with it.

It may afford matter of sorrowful thought and consideration, that so many are far from that righteousness which is recommended both by reason and revelation: that so few are eminent therein: and likewise that there are others whose character is but doubtful, both to themselves and others.

However, our main business is not to lament, or aggravate the faults or defects of others: but to amend our own. And since there is reason to fear, that many will hereafter seek to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and shall not be able: since we have the prospect of a rest remaining for the people of God, let us take heed that we fail not thereof.

If any are able to assure their hearts before God, as sincere and upright, and have a comfortable hope of the future heavenly inheritance reserved for his children: let them take the comfort of it. If ever we attain that felicity, we shall have clearer apprehensions of these truths, than now we have, and shall be ennobled by them. Now we know but in part, and prophesy but in part, and are sanctified but in part. "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part," all imperfection, of every kind, "shall be done away," 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10.

SERMON VI.

WISDOM ATTAINABLE BY THOSE WHO SEEK IT.

I love them that love me. And they that seek me early, shall find me. Prov. viii. 17.

The book of Proverbs is a large collection of excellent rules, maxims, and observations, for directing the conduct of men of every age, and almost every circumstance and condition of life. A particular regard is herein had to persons of tender age, unexperienced, and entering into the world. Counsels are delivered with much affection and earnestness. The same things are repeated, and inculcated again and again. The attention of men is excited by frequent representations of the importance of right conduct, and of the snares they are exposed to, by which they are in danger of being misled to their utter ruin.

More effectually to recommend the reasonable and useful counsels and observations here proposed, they are often delivered in the name of Wisdom. Wisdom herself is introduced, as teaching these things. So at the beginning of this chapter: "Doth not Wisdom cry, and Understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way, in the places of the paths:——Unto you, O men, I call: and my voice is to the sons of men. And, as an encouragement to all to hearken to her, and pursue the rules she lays down, she says in the words of the text: "I love them that love me: and they that seek me early, shall find me."

If it were a thing of any moment, I might just observe to you, that what in our English translation is rendered, seek early, is but one word in the original. The Hebrew therefore might be as well rendered, they that seek me, shall find me. However, our translators have not done much amiss in adding something concerning the best manner of seeking wisdom: or in expressing what may be supposed to be implied in the word. "I love them that love me: and they that seek me early," or diligently, "shall find me."

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Without any farther preface, I would now immediately lay down the method in which I intend to discourse on these words.

I. In the first place I shall endeavour to shew how we are to understand the word wisdom, as used in the book of Proverbs.

II. I shall shew what is comprehended in wisdom.

III. I shall consider, what is to be understood by loving wisdom, and seeking it.

IV. I shall observe the encouragement, here set before men, to seek wisdom: they shall find it.

V. And then conclude with directions for the right manner of seeking it.

I. I shall endeavour to shew how we are to understand the word wisdom as used in the book of Proverbs.

Hereby some have understood a real person, and even a divine person. And this their opinion is founded chiefly, I think, upon some expressions in this eighth chapter. As ver. 15, "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, and all the judges of the earth:" And especially those words in ver. 22, 23: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was."

But the meaning of these words I take to be this: 'that God himself is wise, and before he 'created the world he had wisdom in himself: and that the laws of righteousness, and the rules 'of right conduct, are everlasting and unchangeable.'

It is agreeable to the stile of this book, not to understand by wisdom a real person, but an attribute, or property clothed with a personal character, or a feigned personage introduced. In like manner it has been very common for polite writers to introduce justice, or virtue, or wisdom, or prudence, delivering rules and counsels to men, or reproving their folly and extravagance. Sometimes they are represented looking down, at other times coming down from heaven to visit the abodes of mortals: or, in the style of the Proverbs, men, the sons of men: calling aloud to them, dehorting them from their evil ways, and perverse wanderings, and inviting them into the paths of truth and happiness; which reason, and the considerations of their own true interest prescribe to them.

The personage introduced in this book in the name and character of wisdom is represented to be a queen, or a wealthy matron or lady: for her servants, or attendants, are maidens. She is brought in as a matron, living in great credit. Her house is a spacious and lofty building, adorned with a magnificent portico at the entrance, consisting of seven, or many pillars. She there makes an entertainment, and invites people to come and partake of her provisions; that is, to hear and receive the rules and principles of knowledge and virtue.

This is beautifully expressed at the beginning of the ninth, the following chapter: "Wisdom has builded her house: she has hewn out her seven pillars: she has killed her beasts: she has mingled her wine: she has also furnished her table: she has sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places in the city," Prov. i. 21. Or, as in another place: "She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates. In the city she uttereth her words:" that is, in the most public and frequented places, where there is usually the greatest resort of people: "Whoso is simple let him turn in hither." She rejects not the weakest, and the most deluded. If they will but attend, she will teach them what is fit and becoming: "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither. As for him that wanteth understanding, she says to him: Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding."

This stately dwelling, or palace of wisdom, where men may receive instruction, is alluded to at ver. 34th of this chapter: "Blessed is the man that heareth me watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my door."

Moreover wisdom is used in this book, as equivalent to understanding or instruction. "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?" Prov. viii. 1. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getting understanding," ch. iii. 13. And, "Take fast hold of instruction. Let her not go. Keep her, for she is thy life," ch. iv. 13. If understanding and instruction are not persons, what reason is there to think that wisdom is so?

And agreeable to this account is that affectionate counsel: "Say unto wisdom, thou art my sister: and to understanding, thou art my kinswoman," ch. vii. 4.

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The opinion therefore, that wisdom is a real person, or a distinct subsistence, and intelligent being, appears to be without foundation. It is much more reasonable to suppose, that wisdom is only a fictitious character, or personage introduced, in order to recommend to men more effectually, and with greater advantage, those rules of righteousness which it is of the highest importance they should regard.

II. I would now shew what is comprehended in wisdom.

By wisdom, in general, we are to understand the principles of order and proportion, both in the natural and the moral world: or the laws and rules of exact order and proportion in the things of nature, and the rules of discreet and virtuous conduct among rational and intelligent beings. This is the most general and comprehensive meaning of the word wisdom. And it is plainly used in this sense in the book of Proverbs, particularly in this chapter.

1. It includes, I say, the rules and principles of beauty, order and proportion in the things of nature: according to which rules God made the world, and disposed and adjusted the several parts of it. So in the 27th and following verses of this chapter: "When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." That is, all God's works of creation were performed in wisdom: and it was his will and pleasure to direct and command all things, according to the most perfect rules of order and proportion. The same thing is expressed elsewhere after this manner: "The Lord by wisdom has founded the earth: by understanding has he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew," ch. iii. 19, 20. This exquisite order and proportion in the several parts of nature are beautifully and forcibly described in the prophet Isaiah. "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" Is. xl. 12.

2. But though wisdom comprehends in it the rules of beauty and perfection, order and proportion, in natural things; yet you cannot but be sensible, that what Solomon in this book chiefly enlarges upon, and most earnestly recommends, is right conduct. Nor does he here speak of the sacrifices of beasts, and offerings of the fruits of the earth, nor of external washings and purifications: the methods of which may be various, where no one of them is of absolute necessity: But the things he insists upon are the rules and principles of virtuous conduct: which are right and reasonable in themselves, and always and universally obligatory.

And because these moral rules and principles are the subjects of his discourse, therefore the lessons, which wisdom teaches and recommends, are represented and characterised, as right things, as proclaimed in the most public places, and as everlasting, or in being before the world was.

These rules and counsels of wisdom are said to be right and excellent. Thus at the sixth verse. "Hear, for I will speak of excellent things: and the opening of my lips shall be right things." 'The rules, which I deliver: the things, I recommend to men, are right, and fit. 'Their reasonableness and usefulness cannot be contested or gainsayed.'

They are also represented, as proclaimed in places of the greatest resort, and indeed in all places: because they are obvious to men's reason and understanding: and there are not a few who speak of them, and recommend them to others, who are less knowing: and because the judgment and conscience of all men in general assent to them, and not seldom put them in mind of them. This is the design of those expressions at the beginning of this chapter, and of other like expressions elsewhere. "Does not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of the high places, by the way, in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors." And ver. 8, 9, "All my words are in righteousness. There is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." Every where her reasonable precepts are sounding in men's ears, and demanding attention and regard.

They are also always obligatory. And therefore are spoken of as ancient, eternal, and unalterable rules and maxims. ver. 22—26. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth

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was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth—While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world."

These are general characters and properties of the rules and principles of wisdom, relating to the moral conduct of men.

And it should be observed, that wisdom with her principles, contains the rules and maxims of all right conduct, with dissuasives from every evil thing; particularly wisdom includes these several things:

1.) The fear of God, the first principle, and the most important branch of religion: which is much spoken of, and greatly recommended in this book of Proverbs, and in the book of Ecclesiastes, another work of the wise man, containing observations upon human affairs, and upon the divine providence and government of this world. "The fear of the Lord," says he, "is the beginning of wisdom," Prov. ix. 10; "and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. The fear of the Lord is strong confidence," ch. xiv. 26. "Let not thy heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long," ch. xxiii. 17. "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man," Eccl. xii. 13; the sum and substance of his duty, and his main interest and concern.

2.) Wisdom, with its principles and maxims, includes the rules and laws of sobriety and moderation for all earthly things. "The knowledge of the Lord is to hate evil. Pride and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate," Prov. viii. 13. And you know very well, that there are in this book many earnest dissuasives from all manner of excess and intemperance, and every thing contrary to purity. Ambition, vain conceit, immoderate love of pleasure and riches, haughtiness of speech and countenance, sloth and idleness, are here also condemned and exposed: and humility, modesty, diligence, and a teachable and inquisitive temper, are frequently recommended.

3.) Wisdom includes righteousness and equity toward other men. So this book begins: "The proverbs of Solomon:—to know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the instruction of wisdom, justice and equity." At the twentieth verse of the eighth chapter: "I lead in the midst of the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment." And in the twenty-first chapter is that excellent remark: "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord, than sacrifice," ch. xxi. 3.

4.) Beside all these things, wisdom includes prudence, or a becoming regard, and discreet concern for our own interests. So Solomon in this chapter, drawing the character of wisdom, introduces her, saying: "I wisdom dwell with prudence. I find out knowledge of witty inventions," ch. viii. 12. Many are the prudential directions and cautions which are inserted in this collection of wise and judicious maxims and observations. And the importance and the advantage of prudence are often shewn. It is said: "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent looketh well to his going," Prov. xiv. 15. Agreeably to which the Psalmist observes: "A good man will guide his affairs with discretion," Ps. cxii. 5. or, as in the margin of our Bibles, with judgment, which is the same thing.

5.) Wisdom includes the laws of civil government, tending to the good order, peace and prosperity of large bodies and societies of men. Thus it is expressly said in this chapter: "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom. I am understanding, I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth," ver. 14, 15.

This is wisdom. It contains the principles of beauty, order and proportion in the things of nature, and all the branches of good conduct in men: particularly the fear of God, or a serious and awful, yet delightful and cheerful respect for the Divine Being, and sincere gratitude for all his benefits: sobriety, or the government of ourselves, and a just moderation of our affections for sensible things: justice, judgment and equity toward others: discretion in the management of our own affairs: and the just and equitable laws of civil government.

III. We should now consider, what is to be understood by loving wisdom, and seeking it.

And hereby nothing more is meant, than a desire to be wise, and endeavours to attain to wisdom. To love wisdom is to esteem and prize it: to be persuaded, that its principles and rules must be right: and to be desirous to know and be acquainted with them, and the reasons of them: together with a sincere purpose, and firm resolution of mind, to walk by them, and make them the rule of our action. Such will use the means of improvement. The thoughts of

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such will be much about this matter. They will hearken to instruction, and attend to their teachers. They will be inquisitive, and observe, and lay up, and meditate upon what they have heard. They will not be averse to counsel, or even reproof. This is seeking wisdom. Such are very likely to succeed in their pursuit, and to obtain their wishes and desires.

IV. Which brings us to the next point, the encouragement here afforded, and set before men, in these expressions: "I love them that love me: and they that seek me shall find me.

Three things may be reckoned to be implied in this encouragement. Such shall attain to the knowledge of the principles of wisdom. They shall become wise, and act wisely and virtuously. They will have all the advantages which are annexed to the knowledge and observation of wise counsels and maxims.

1. They who love wisdom, and seek it, will attain to the knowledge of its rules and principles, and the ways it recommends. It is the design of the undertaking in this book of Proverbs, as declared at the beginning, (as it is also the design of all other like attempts) "to give knowledge to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion." And in this eighth chapter: "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." That is, the knowledge of them is easy to be attained by those who are attentive. And they who have so much understanding, as to prize wisdom, will soon perceive how right and reasonable all its rules and precepts are.

Again, in the second chapter of this book: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding: yea if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding: if thou seekest for her, as for silver, and searchest for her, as for hid treasure:" that is, if thou be sincere and diligent in seeking after wisdom, as what thou esteemest very valuable: "then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity, yea every good work.

They who seek knowledge and understanding, who are sincerely desirous to be informed in the principles of wisdom, will certainly become acquainted with all the rules and precepts which are of general importance, and suited to their rank and condition.

2. If you love and seek wisdom, you will become wise, discreet and virtuous, and make its maxims the rule of your conduct. So Solomon says in the just cited second chapter of this book: "When wisdom enters into thy heart, and knowledge is pleasant to thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things: who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the way of darkness."

He who loves wisdom, and labours sincerely to be acquainted with its principles, and perceives how right, and reasonable they are, must be disposed to observe and follow them: and will be prepared for, and fortified against the enticements of sinners, and the specious pretences of those who speak froward and perverse things.

3. Another thing included in this encouragement is, that they who love and seek wisdom, shall have the many advantages that are annexed to the knowledge, and practice, or observation of wise rules and maxims. This must be implied in the expressions here used of wisdom's "loving them that love her," and being "found of them that seek her." She will favour, prefer, and advance such, and cheerfully bestow upon them all the gifts and blessings which are in her disposal, and which indeed are great and manifold.

These are oftentimes affectionately set before men, in a variety of expressions, in order to determine their right choice: which cannot but be much for their benefit.

"My son, forget not my law: but let thy heart keep my commandments. For length of days, and long life, and peace shall they add unto thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee. Bind them about thy neck, write them upon the table of thy heart. So shalt thou find favour and good understanding, [or acceptance,] in the sight of God and man," Prov. iii. 1—4. And afterwards: "Happy is the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies. And all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her, and happy is every one that retaineth her," ver. 18——18.

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Again; "Keep my commandments, and live. Get wisdom, get understanding. Forget it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee. She shall bring thee to honour, when thou shalt embrace her. She shall give to thy head an ornament of grace. A crown of glory shall she give unto thee. Hear, my son, and receive my sayings: and the years of thy life shall be many," Prov. iv. 4—10.

Peace and tranquillity is one great advantage, mentioned in the passages already cited. Again it is said: "Thou shalt walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: Yea thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken," ch. iii. 23—26.

And though it be true, that a "little, which a righteous man has, is better than the treasures of many wicked," Ps. xxxvii. 16; yet virtue and discretion do also tend to secure a competence; and often add, or give, great abundance: as it is said in a place before cited: "Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour," Prov. iii. 16. And, "Through wisdom is an house builded, and by understanding it is established. And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches:" that is, with all things both for use and ornament. "A wise man is strong: yea a wise man increaseth strength," Prov. xxiv. 3—5.

All these blessings are often, and with great assurance, spoken of as advantages usually attending wisdom: or as the happy lot and portion of those who value and seek it, and observe and obey its rules and directions; health and long life, riches and honour; that is, a competence, and sometimes abundance, and credit and honour therewith; safety and security, peace and quietness, and great satisfaction of mind.

V. I shall conclude all with some directions concerning the right manner of seeking wisdom. Seek it early, diligently, and with continuance, and decline the society of those who respect not the laws of wisdom.

1. Seek wisdom early, or without delay: now, immediately, apply yourselves to the study of the principles of wisdom, the rules of right conduct. Attend to the instructions given you, suitable to your age and condition, by those who are knowing, and are concerned for your welfare and prosperity, both in soul and body. And now, immediately, form in your minds a fixed purpose and resolution of living and acting by those rules which appear just, wise, and reasonable.

2. Seek wisdom diligently. Let not time run waste, without employment. Let not whole days be lost in sloth and idleness: but be concerned to make daily improvement in some part of useful knowledge. Let the rules and maxims of wisdom be thought of, and meditated upon early and late. Let her principles be familiar to your minds, and always entertaining and delightful. So will they occur to you when they should be brought into action, and when you are in danger of being seduced to act contrary to them.

3. You must also endeavour to continue in this your love and affection for wisdom, and careful attention to her, because of our natural weakness and inconstancy, and because there are temptations and tempters: and you are in danger, if you are off your guard, of being misled by the enticements, or the provocations, of those you meet with.

4. Therefore let me add: decline as much as possible familiarity and intimacy with those who shew no respect to the laws of wisdom: who have little or no worth: who possess, indeed, the human shape and intellect, but aim at no improvement: who rashly and inconsiderately venture to make a jest of sin, and despise wisdom, because it is too high for them: who are pleased with the worthless trash of sensual enjoyments: but have no taste of perfection and beauty, order and proportion, and the principles thereof, either in the natural, or the moral world: whose views and prospects are narrow and confined, low and base, like the "very beasts that perish," Ps. xlix. 12, 20; minding nothing but present objects: neither looking forward to future time, nor observing the consequences and tendencies of things present. Reckon yourselves to be above such contemptible people; and disdain to follow either their counsel or their example.

These are they that love wisdom. These she loves. They that so seek her shall find her, and be blessed with all the precious things in her gift.

Let not, then, any immoderate love of pleasure, or ease, or much riches, or high honour and preferment, enter into the mind, to damp this reasonable principle, this excellent and becoming,

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this virtuous and hopeful disposition, the love of wisdom. But let this always be the prevailing, the governing, influencing principle of your minds. "Exalt wisdom and she will promote you." Esteem and study her rules and maxims, constantly obey her precepts, and decline not from her paths. "She will, then, bring you to honour, and crown you with durable riches and righteousness."

SERMON VII.

LITTLE CHILDREN BROUGHT TO CHRIST.

Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray. And the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said: Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them. Matt. xix. 13, 14, 15.

It was now near the conclusion of our Saviour's ministry and life on this earth. He was in a place beyond Jordan, from whence he went up to Jerusalem, where he suffered.

This particular history being related by three evangelists, it is likely, that it contains something which may be of use for our direction or encouragement. St. John indeed has not taken any notice of it. But you are sensible, that he had seen the three former gospels before he wrote: and therefore he very rarely gives an account of such things as had been sufficiently related already by one or more of the other evangelists.

In St. Mark's gospel this history is recorded after this manner, ch. x. 13: "And they brought young children unto him, that he should touch them. And his disciples rebuked those that brought them. 14. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them: Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 15. Verily, I say unto you: whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. 16. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

St. Luke says, ch. xviii. 15: "And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them. But when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16. But Jesus called them unto him, and said: Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. 17. Verily, I say unto you: Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein."

These are the accounts which the evangelists have given us of this matter,

I shall endeavour to make an improvement of this history by considering these several particulars:

I. Who were now brought to Christ.

II. For what end they were brought to him.

III. The reception he gave them; which at the very first view may be perceived to be kind and gracious.

IV. The declaration made concerning them, that "of such is the kingdom of heaven," or "the kingdom of God."

I. The first particular to be considered by us is, who were now brought to Christ.

In St. Matthew they are styled little children. In one place of St. Mark we have, in our version, young children: but in the original it is still one and the same word; which therefore throughout those two evangelists should be uniformly rendered little children.

In St. Luke they are called infants: a word, which, as the critics in the Greek language say, comprehends any children from the time of their birth, till they are four years of age. It is the same word which we have in another text: "Knowing, that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures," 2 Tim. iii. 15.

That these were little children may be inferred from a circumstance mentioned in St. Mark, that Jesus "took them in his arms."

Their tender age may be argued likewise from hence: that it is not said of Christ, that he taught them, or asked them any questions.

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I choose not to argue from the expression of their being brought to Christ: not thinking it sufficient to prove, that they were carried in arms. For the phrase may be used of such as are led, conducted, guided to a place or person.

Upon the whole we may conclude, I think, that they were what they are called by the evangelists, little children, or infants. None of them were arrived to the full exercise of reason: and some of them might be carried in the arms of their friends.

II. The next particular to be considered by us is, what views they had who brought these little children to Jesus: or, for what end they were brought to him.

It does not appear that they were brought to Jesus to be healed by him of any sickness, or weakness, which they were afflicted with: for there is nothing of that kind hinted in any of the evangelists, though no less than three of them have recorded this history. And, if that had been the case, the disciples, it is likely, would not have rebuked the persons who came with these children. For before now there had been such applications made to our Lord by many persons, not only for themselves, but for others also: for their friends, or their children, or their servants.

For what end and purpose, then, may some say, should these little children be brought to Jesus, who were so young as to have little or no exercise of reason and understanding, and must therefore have been incapable of receiving instruction?

That we may the better answer this inquiry, we should attend to the evangelists' expressions. St. Mark says, "they brought little children to Jesus, that he should touch them." St. Luke: "they brought unto him also" or even "infants, that he should touch them." But in our text, in St. Matthew, it is said: "that he should put his hands on them, and pray." And it is likely, that this is the meaning of all the evangelists: it having been common among the Jews, to lay the hand upon those whom they blessed: or for whom they prayed to God, that he would bless them. So, when Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph in Egypt, a little before his death, he laid his hands upon each of them, Gen. xlviii. 14.

These persons therefore, here spoken of, brought these "little children" to Jesus, that he "might lay his hands upon them and bless them." They had a high opinion of the piety of Jesus, and of his interest in the divine favour. Probably they were disciples, or believers, such as took Jesus for a prophet, and even the great prophet who was to come, the Messiah. And they were desirous that their children should receive a blessing from him.

Some may be apt to think, this must have been a superstitious, and fond conceit of these persons. To which I would answer, that, probably, it was not entirely so. For in that case Jesus would not have shewn them such regard. It cannot be thought, that our Lord would countenance an action, that was altogether unreasonable, and quite destitute of all good foundation. And supposing, that there was a mixture of some wrong views in this conduct, the Lord Jesus was more gracious than to reject these persons, or condemn their design upon that account. The twelve disciples had not been perfectly disinterested, or free from all secular views, in coming to him and following him. Yet he was well pleased with their attendance on him: and he promised them a reward for it if they continued to act as disciples with sincerity: though they still wanted a sinless perfection, and had not a wisdom void of all defects, Luke xxii. 28—30.

III. The third thing is the reception he gave these children: which at the very first view, we plainly perceive to be kind and gracious.

The disciples rebuked those who brought them. They turned them away, as impertinent and troublesome. They refused them admission to the presence of their Master, and reproved their design in coming to him. But when Jesus perceived what had been done, he was much displeased, and said unto them, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" nor their friends, who would bring them to me. And those in particular, who were now brought to him, he received. Some of them he "took up into his arms," and affectionately embraced them: on all he "laid his hands, and blessed them."

How he blessed them, or prayed for them, the evangelists have not said particularly: but we may reasonably conclude, that he offered up to the Father some prayers for them, suited to the doctrine taught by him.

Possibly he presented some requests, agreeing with the prayer he had given to his disciples.

Or, he prayed for them 'that they might know God, and him whom he had sent, so as to 'obtain everlasting life.'

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Or, 'Father, sanctify these little children through thy truth: thy word is truth.'

Or, 'I pray not, that thou shouldst now take them to thyself out of this world, though it be 'a world of snares and sorrows: but I pray that thou wilt keep them from the evil of the world. 'Father, keep through thy own name these little ones, which have been now brought unto me.'

In some such way as this we may suppose he blessed these little children, or prayed for them and recommended them to God; that is in a manner becoming his affectionate concern for their real welfare and everlasting happiness, and his near relation and intimate union with the Father.

IV. The fourth and last thing to be observed by us is Christ's declaration concerning these little children: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

So here in St. Matthew. But in the two other evangelists the expression is: "Of such is the kingdom of God." Which two expressions are equivalent, denoting one and the same thing; the gospel dispensation, the state of things under the Messiah, or the church and kingdom of God on earth, in which men are prepared for the heavenly state, the church and kingdom of God above: therefore John the Baptist said: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand," Matt. iii. 2; ch. iv. 17. And so Jesus preached likewise.

"Of such is the kingdom of heaven:" that is, of such consists the kingdom of heaven. Or, to such belongs the kingdom of heaven, with its privileges: such as these are the members and subjects of God's church and kingdom on earth, and heirs of his kingdom in heaven, with all its riches and glory.

The chief difficulty is to determine the meaning of the word *such*: there being, as it is thought, an ambiguity in that expression. And it may be questioned whether we are hereby to understand, of such as resemble these little children is the kingdom of heaven: or of such little children as these. I shall therefore observe to you, how these words are paraphrased by some pious and learned expositors of scripture.

Upon these words an [a] ancient writer observes: 'Christ does not say, of these, but of such is 'the kingdom of heaven: that is, of persons of simplicity, who are innocent, and free from vice 'and wickedness.' A modern writer [b] explains the words in this manner: 'Of these, and such 'like. Christ does not exclude children, when he includes the adult, who are like them.' Another learned interpreter [c] of our time thus paraphraseth the words of the text. 'Do not 'hinder little children from coming to me. For it is these, and men qualified like these, with 'innocence, humility, and a teachable disposition, free from all prejudices, and customs of sinning, 'that are the only fit persons to be made members of my church on earth, and inheritors of the 'kingdom of God in heaven.'

And we are farther assured, that our Lord intended to say: 'Of such as are like these little 'children is the kingdom of heaven;' because he does expressly recommend resemblance in what follows in St. Mark and St. Luke. "Verily, I say unto you: Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, shall not enter therein." And I think, the other sense, though not so certain, ought not to be quite set aside: that is, 'to these and such little children, '(as well as those who are like them) belongs the kingdom of heaven.'

However, it is fit we should consider what Christ recommends in these words, and wherein they who are adult, and grown up to years of understanding, ought to resemble little children. Let me mention three or four things: freedom from prejudice, or openness to conviction: freedom from pride, or humility: freedom from worldly affections, or indifference to earthly things: and finally, freedom from custom of sinning, or innocence.

1. One thing observable in little children is freedom from prejudices, or openness to conviction; which is one great part of a teachable disposition. Indeed, they do not know the truth. But then, neither are they prejudiced against it: and by that means they are ready to receive it, when proposed to them. This is a property which all ought to aim at, and to preserve so long as they are imperfect in knowledge. The want of this temper hindered the Jews from receiving Jesus, and the truths he taught. They had a prejudice, a false and groundless notion, that the expected Messiah would be an earthly prince and powerful monarch, and would set up a worldly kingdom on this earth; in the civil advantages of which his servants and followers should partake: whereas it was a spiritual empire in the hearts, and over the lives of men, and a kingdom of righteousness that he was to introduce, in order to prepare men for the services and enjoyments of the heavenly life.

[a] Theophyl. in Evang. p. 112. [b] Luc. Bru. ap. Pol. Syn. [c] Dr. S. Clarke.

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It must be of great advantage, to be free from that prejudice, or any other like it: and to be determined to quit any notion, when good evidence to the contrary is produced.

2. Another thing observable in children, and in which others ought to resemble them, is freedom from pride or humility. This temper also renders men teachable and tractable, and susceptible of improvement in knowledge and virtue: whereas conceit is a most effectual bar to improvement of every kind. They who are opinionated of their knowledge and wisdom, or of their eminent character, and noble exploits and services, will not bear to be admonished, nor submit to receive new truths and farther discoveries, how well soever recommended.

Here we cannot avoid recollecting those words of our Lord, where he expresseth his cheerful acquiescence in the success of his ministry, and says: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth: because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes," Matt. xi. 25.

"Hid from the wise and prudent:" not from those who were really so: but from those who were so esteemed by many, and who were opinionated of their own knowledge and wisdom, and their reputation in the world: whilst the doctrines and truths of the gospel were understood, believed, and embraced by babes: men of inferior station and condition, meaner attainments, and less conceited of themselves, and perhaps despised by others. But not being greatly conceited, they hearkened to instruction, and discerned and embraced the truths taught and proposed to them.

3. Another thing observable in children is freedom from earthly affections, or indifference about the great things of this world: such as riches, honour, and preferment. This is so obvious, not only in little children and infants, but in all very young persons in general, that parents, and others of experience in life, are oftentimes not a little concerned at it, lest they should not duly regard their temporal interests. And they think it expedient to shew them the use and value of these things, and by frequent observations infuse at least a small degree of ambition, and some worldly-mindedness into their constitution.

But our blessed Lord, without undervaluing, or depreciating any of the comforts of this life, recommends, and highly esteems, as you well know, a judicious contempt of all earthly things, and a determined preference of truth and integrity, the favour of God, and a title to the heavenly happiness, above all earthly honours, possessions and enjoyments. And he often declares, that he who is not willing to part with what he has of these things for his sake, if the circumstances he is brought into should require it, cannot be his disciple, or approve himself a lover of truth.

The necessity of resembling little children in indifference to riches, or in a freedom from inordinate affection for them, is illustrated by a history, which follows the text, of the rich man, who when directed by Christ to go, and sell what he had, and give to the poor; assuring him withal, that then he should have treasure in heaven; "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

The necessity of resembling little children in freedom from ambition, or an immoderate desire of grandeur and preferment, Christ taught his own disciples in particular. For, when they had asked him, "who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven," supposing the kingdom of the Messiah would have in it much honour and power, "he called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said: Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself, as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xviii. 1—4.

4. Another thing, in which others ought to resemble little children, is freedom from custom of sinning, or innocence. Little children, and infants, such as most, or all those were who were now brought to Christ, are universally allowed to be free from actual sin. They have as yet made no wrong choice: they have done no evil thing. And others, who have sinned, in order to partake of the kingdom of God, are to become like them, by washing away their sins with the tears of unfeigned sorrow, by reformation and amendment, by ceasing to do evil, and being free from the habitual and allowed practice of all iniquity.

Of such as these consists the kingdom of heaven. To those who in these things resemble little children belongs the kingdom of God. Such will receive the gospel. They will come into the kingdom of the Messiah. They will continue true members and faithful subjects of it, and finally inherit all the glory and happiness of the kingdom of God above.

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V. Having considered these several particulars, let us now make a farther improvement in some reflections.

1. The doctrine of this text may afford comfortable thoughts concerning such as die in infancy, or in very early age, before they have done good or evil. Christ, speaking of little children, says: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." If he do not clearly say, of these, and such like children, yet he certainly says, of such as resemble them is the kingdom of heaven. And if we should not suppose him to say expressly more than that, yet it is sufficient to fill us with comfortable apprehensions concerning those who are removed hence in very early life. For it cannot be easily admitted, that they should perish everlastingly, who are set before others as emblems of simplicity, innocence and humility, and patterns of imitation and resemblance.

To these do not belong the characters of those whom Christ will bid depart from him. They are not workers of iniquity. They have not refused to entertain and relieve the afflicted and persecuted followers of Jesus on earth. He has declared, that "they who do not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, shall not enter therein." And can it be thought that little children shall be excluded?

2. This text teaches us to be cautious, how we disparage the human nature, and say, that it is in its original conception corrupt, depraved and defiled. Our Lord seems not to have acknowledged any original depravity of our nature: for he recommended a resemblance of little children to his disciples, and others. And when little children were brought unto him, he expressed affection for them. He embraced them, and blessed them, and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

They who vilify nature, do, in effect (though perhaps unwittingly, and undesignedly) reproach the Author of nature.

Solomon, after an attentive survey of the affairs of this world, and particularly the many disorders therein, was fully persuaded of this truth: "This only have I found," says he, "that God made man upright. But they have sought out many inventions," Ecc. vii. 29.

St. Paul when he proves all men, both Jews and Gentiles, "guilty before God," Rom. iii. 19, alleges not their bad nature, but their evil practices.

Some indeed are early drawn aside into evil courses by the snares of this world; which occasioned the Psalmist to say hyperbolically of some wicked men: "They are estranged from the womb. They go astray as soon as they are born," Ps. lviii. 3. And in like manner David, after the commission of the great sins he had fallen into, recollects also his past sins, and says: "he had been shapen in iniquity, and in sin did his mother conceive him," Ps. li. 7; that is, he laments his too great propensity to some sins, and humbly owns, that even in early life he had done things which he ought to repent of, and blame himself for. But he is here speaking of himself, or his own particular constitution, not of all men in general.

The scripture does not ascribe the difficulty of reforming great sinners to the badness of their nature, but to the evil habits they have contracted: representing it as very unlikely, that they should "do good, who had been accustomed to do evil," Jer. xiii. 23.

St. Paul reminds the Ephesians, that once, in their Gentile state, "they were dead in trespasses and sins," Eph. ii. 1. Which expression, however, can never be applied to infants. And with the apostle, a life in sin is not life but death. As he says elsewhere: "She that liveth in pleasure, is dead, while she liveth," 1 Tim. v. 6. And what follows, shews, that he means practice of sinning, or actual and wilful sins. "Wherein," says he to those Ephesians, "in time past ye walked, according to the course of this world," Eph. ii. 2.—He proceeds: "Among whom also we all," we Jews also, for the most part, and generally, "had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind: and were by nature," in our former state, before we were enlightened by the gospel, "children of wrath," deservedly exposed to punishment, "as well as others," ver. 3. "But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ.——And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together, in heavenly places in Christ," ver. 4, 5, 6. The whole context shews, that the apostle is not speaking of punishment due to natural corruption, but to actual sin. Nor does he say, And indeed we all are, but "were by nature children of wrath." So we were when we "had our conversation in the lusts of our flesh." But God in his great mercy had through Jesus Christ delivered the Ephesians, and others, from that state of sin and misery.

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We are weak and frail, and liable to temptations. But we can easily conceive how God may treat such creatures wisely and equitably. He will shew his displeasure against the presumptuous, and even the careless. And he will reward the obedient, the careful and watchful. But we are not able to conceive how God should reject and condemn any for what is not owing to choice, but nature.

Some men will confess the corruption of their nature. But, I apprehend, it must be truer humility, for a man seriously, and sincerely, without reserve, to confess all his sins in thought, word, and deed, against God and his neighbour. The former is only an acknowledgment of supposed corruption, common to all; and may be attended with spiritual pride, and scornful disdain of others. But to confess sincerely all our own sins and faults is true humility. This humility is a virtue in such creatures as we are, and the ground of other virtues. It is also acceptable to God. And "whosoever confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy," Prov. xxviii. 13.

3. This history teaches us the right of young persons to be present at the worship of God: and seems to hold forth the duty of those under whose care they are, to bring them early to it. Some brought little children to Christ, that he might lay his hands on them, and bless them. And he received them, and did as he was desired. Though children do not understand every thing that is said, yet they have ears to hear, and eyes to see, and will observe. And gradually a reverence for the Divine Being, and an apprehension and persuasion of invisible things, will be formed in their minds, and such principles implanted in them, as will bring forth good fruit.

4. We may infer from this history, that it is not below persons of the greatest eminence for wisdom and piety to shew affection and tenderness for little children. Jesus Christ is a good pattern for imitation in all his condescensions. And his disciples should do as he has done. Let us receive kindly, and, as we are able, recommend to the divine favour and protection such little children as Jesus himself, when on earth, received and blessed.

5. We hence learn, that all of us arrived to years of knowledge and understanding should see to it, that we bear a resemblance to little children: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Let us be always like them in freedom from prejudices, being open to conviction, disposed to learn, and make further improvement by all discoveries proposed to us.

Let us resemble them also in humility, or freedom from pride, and high conceit of ourselves: which obstructs improvement, excites to a haughty and imperious behaviour, and disposes to strife and contention, anger and resentment.

Let us resemble them in indifference about worldly things, or a freedom from an inordinate affection for riches, honour and preferment, pre-eminence and authority.

Lastly, let us resemble them in innocence, being as free from all evil practices as possible.

In a word, according to this observation of our Lord, we should always endeavour to be, in many respects, what we once were, and what we still see little children to be. So shall we do no evil. So shall we be Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile.

6. This history affords encouragement to young persons arrived to the use of reason and understanding to come to Christ, and offer up themselves to God in and through him. Jesus received the little children who were brought to him; and he proposed them to others as patterns of resemblance, they being free from customs of sinning. But after all, they were rather emblems of virtue, than virtuous themselves. Much more then will they be received by him, who being still without guile, have an actual propensity and disposition to virtue and goodness. If you should neglect yourselves, when you have attained to the use of your rational powers, and are entering into the world, bad principles and habits will grow up, like weeds in a rich soil, of which no care is taken: and you will soon lose all that innocence and simplicity which endears children to the Lord Jesus.

Let me therefore propound to you the few following counsels and directions.

1.) Be induced to give up yourselves to God with deliberation, and with all the seriousness and solemnity you are able, engaging and resolving, that you will not sin against him, or do any thing contrary to his holy commandments, so far as you are acquainted with them. Such a fixed and deliberate purpose and resolution of mind, once formed, may be of great and lasting advantage to you.

2.) Be diligent, and improve your time for gaining knowledge. You are not to be like little children in every thing. You should resemble them in innocence: but in "understanding

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you are to be men," 1 Cor. xiv. 20. Beside attending to the instructions you receive, in order to qualify you for some honest and reputable employment, whereby you may gain a subsistence, without being burthensome to any, and may be useful to others: as you have opportunity, employ yourselves in reading the scriptures, especially the history of the Patriarchs, in Genesis, and the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles: and indeed all the books of the New Testament, and also other useful and instructive books. You may likewise endeavour to improve by conversation with persons of sobriety and discretion, and, if it may be, of such as are somewhat advanced above you in years and knowledge. Hereby the mind will be enlarged. You will gain generous sentiments. Your usefulness, when you are settled in the world, will be more extensive. You may have the greater influence and reputation. And you will certainly lay a foundation for a great deal of entertainment and satisfaction within yourselves, which some others want.

3.) Pay a regard to every branch of duty: not doing one thing, and neglecting others, as many do, but aiming at every part of holiness. You know that St. Paul says: "The grace of God which bringeth salvation teaches us to deny all ungodliness, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," Tit. ii. 11, 12.

Live godly: fear and reverence the Divine Majesty in your thoughts. Frequent the assemblies of divine worship, and forsake them not; as some do, who fancy themselves wiser than others, without really being so.

Live soberly: govern your affections, and take care not to be led by evil examples to any excess or indulgence, contrary to strict sobriety.

Live righteously: do to others as you would others should do unto you. Attend much to relative duties. Behave as you ought to superiors, equals, inferiors, agreeably to your rank and station. It is easy to perceive from the epistles of Christ's apostles in the New Testament, that much of religion lies herein: and that they are very imperfect Christians who are defective in relative duties.

4.) Be persuaded to accustom yourselves to private prayer. This may be understood to be included in a preceding direction. Nevertheless, I have chosen to mention it here particularly and expressly. Pray, as you are able. Use the compendious prayer, which our Lord taught his disciples: or some other prayer, suited to your age and condition. What you want, ask God for. Look up to him, and humbly intreat his gracious and watchful care and protection. Say: 'O Lord, I am thine. Thou hast made me, and I have promised to serve thee. Thou knowest 'my weakness, and all the snares and dangers that surround me. Do thou keep me from evil; 'and vouchsafe unto me all those good things which are needful and convenient for me. I 'would acknowledge thee in all my ways: do thou direct my steps. Grant that I may seriously 'attend to, and carefully improve all the means and helps which thou affordest me for obtaining 'true holiness, and for persevering therein, notwithstanding the temptations I may meet with. 'May I cheerfully perform all the duties and services owing from me to those to whom I stand 'related, and with whom I converse, or have any dealings. And may I so serve and honour 'thee on earth, as that I may be received in thy due time to the joys of thy heavenly and eternal 'kingdom.'

5.) Once more, ever remember the importance of right conduct. This is not a matter of indifference, or of but little moment. But all depends upon it. Good and evil, life and death are set before you; therefore choose the one and refuse the other. Sin is a root of bitterness. It yields bitter fruit, torment, and vexation of mind. But "the fruit of righteousness," or virtue; "is quietness and assurance for ever," Is. xxxii. 17.

Moreover, it should be considered, that "you have been brought to Christ," and instructed in the principles of religion. If after you have had some knowledge of the way of righteousness, you should turn from it, your case would be extremely sad and deplorable. But, I trust, you shall not fall away, but persevere to the end, and at last be placed at the right hand of the Judge of the whole earth, and, together with others, hear that gracious sentence and invitation: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 34.

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SERMON VIII.

THE HAPPINESS OF HAVING RELIGIOUS PARENTS, AND OTHER PIOUS RELATIVES.

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith, that is in thee: which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice: and I am persuaded, that in thee also.

THE ensuing discourse is chiefly intended for the benefit of my younger hearers. And upon occasion of this text I would propound these several observations.

I. It is an advantage to be descended of pious parents, and other religious ancestors.

II. It is commendable in children to attend to the instructions, and imitate the virtues of their parents, and other religious ancestors.

III. They are to be blamed who degenerate from the virtues of their family.

IV. Children have a right to excel their parents in such things as are good and praiseworthy.

V. It is a great and singular happiness, where there is a general agreement and harmony, as to things of religion, among friends and relatives, and the several branches of a family.

I. It is an advantage to be descended of pious parents, and other religious ancestors.

This is evident at first sight. If piety, or any virtue, be preferable to irreligion, and to vicious dispositions and practices, it must be an advantage to be related to such as are religious and virtuous. It cannot but be a privilege, to descend from those who have a knowledge of God, and some just apprehensions of his perfections, and a serious sense of religious things upon their minds. For thereby they are restrained from what is evil: and are obliged, engaged, and excited to that which is good. Moreover, all the behaviour of such persons, and their treatment of others, especially of those who depend upon them, is pleasing, desirable, and agreeable. They therefore who have pious parents enjoy a kind and mild treatment, which many others want.

There is a benefit likewise in the instructions received from such. For they who are themselves pious and religious, will "teach their children, and their household after them, to keep the way of the Lord," Gen. xviii. 19. You, therefore, who are descended from pious parents, have heard of the eternal and unchangeable existence of God, the maker of all things. You have been informed of the goodness and bounty, the mercy and loving-kindness of God to all his creatures, especially those that fear and serve him: and that he has all power in heaven and earth, he is able to defend and uphold all his sincere worshippers, and to reward such as diligently seek and serve him.

You who are born of Christian parents have heard of the love of Jesus Christ in dying for us. You have heard of the mean birth, and humble life of Jesus, who has most clearly taught the way of salvation. You have been acquainted with the promise he made of everlasting happiness to those who sincerely obey the rules of life delivered by him, who love God with all the heart and soul, and their neighbour as themselves, and who persevere in the profession of truth, and the practice of virtue, notwithstanding worldly difficulties and discouragements.

You have likewise such a knowledge of the wonderful works he wrought, that you cannot doubt of the truth of his words. For no man could do such works unless God was with him. His cures of the sick and infirm, and that by a word, and instantly, and raising the dead, are undeniable proofs, that he spake in the name of God, or that the Father had sent him, and that the whole of his doctrine is true, and from heaven.

You have also been instructed in the history of his resurrection and ascension, and the mighty works that were done by the apostles of Jesus after he had left this world, when they preached the doctrine they had received from him. And you have no doubt but he will come again in glory, to judge the quick and the dead, and to give to all men according to the things done by them in this their state of trial.

By the advantage of your birth you have been favoured with the knowledge of divers

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maxims and observations of unquestioned truth and certainty, and of great use to the right conduct of life. You have been told, that a little with the fear of God, is better than great revenues without it, or than the riches of many wicked: that the fear of God, a sense of his care and providence, hope in his promises, especially the great promise of eternal life to the truly pious and virtuous, will afford great peace and satisfaction at all times: that these dispositions will increase the happiness of outward prosperity, and abate the bitterness of all worldly afflictions.

To have been early instructed in these things is a great benefit. How deplorable is the case of those who are ignorant of them!

One thing more I shall mention here, that to your descent from religious parents, possibly, you owe divers temporal advantages. Solomon says: "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but he blesseth the habitation of the just," Prov. iii. 33. From the usefulness, and honourable, and dicreet behaviour of your ancestors, you have inherited credit and reputation. And to their frugality, discretion, diligence, sobriety, and other virtues, you may reckon yourselves indebted for the competence, or the abundance of good things you possess and enjoy: which otherwise might have been squandered away in luxury and excess.

II. They who have this advantage ought to improve it. And it will be commendable in them to attend to the instructions, and imitate the virtues of their religious parents, and other pious ancestors.

St. Paul esteemed it matter of much joy and thanksgiving, that he had "served God from his forefathers with a pure conscience," 2 Tim. i. 3. He speaks to Timothy in the way of commendation, when he says, "that he was persuaded, the same faith dwelt in him, which had first dwelt in his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice."

There is an obligation to attend to wise and wholesome instructions, from whomsoever we receive them: and to follow the good examples we see in any. But there is a more especial obligation to hearken to, and follow pious parents. This is supposed in divers pathetic admonitions which we meet with in scripture. So in those solemn words of David: "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou," own and acknowledge, fear and worship, "the God of thy father," and "serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind——If thou seek him, he will be found of thee: but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever," 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. And says the wise son of king David at the beginning of his book of Proverbs, or collection of wise sayings and observations: "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother," Prov. i. 8. Again: "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother. Bind them continually upon thy heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee: when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee: and when thou walkest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life," chap. vi. 20—23.

III. They are to be blamed, and their case is to be lamented, who degenerate from the wisdom and piety of their religious ancestors.

For it is a great advantage to have had such good instructions, and to have seen good examples in the early part of life. And it implies some faulty disposition not to follow them. There must be, surely, some want of capacity, not to perceive and admire the beauty of good examples: and some perverseness of temper to act contrary to them.

This is often one article of accusation against the Jews, and assigned as a reason of calamities brought upon them, that they had "forsaken the God of their fathers." When God appeared to Solomon after the dedication of the temple, there were affecting warnings, as well as gracious promises, delivered to him and his people. They are to this purpose: "For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever. And mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually.——But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you——then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land, which I gave them——And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it. Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped and served them," 2 Chron. vii. 16—22.

That is what is frequently meant in the Old Testament by "forsaking the God of their fathers;" namely, leaving and abandoning his worship, and going after other gods, and worshipping idols. But as the guilt of idolatry was more especially aggravated in that people, who had

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known the true God, and been instructed in his worship: so in like manner is any departure from God aggravated in those who have been instructed in the principles and duties of true religion. And they who have been early taught the way of righteousness, and seen examples of virtue, if they turn from the holy commandment delivered to them: if they forsake the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and are seduced into the ways of sin and iniquity, they are very blameworthy, and their condition is very pitiable.

IV. Children may, and have a right to exceed and excel their parents and ancestors in those things which are good and praise-worthy.

They are not restrained from this by any rule of reason, or any revealed and written law of God. If their progenitors have been wicked and irreligious, they are not obliged to follow them. They may not do so, upon any considerations whatever. Nor are they who are sincerely, but imperfectly good, to be imitated in their faults, or defects.

Any truth, that appears clearly revealed, ought to be embraced and professed, whether it had been before entertained by those we respect or not. And the commands of God ought to be obeyed, however others may contradict and gainsay. Paul, when it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, did not consult with any man, whether he should be a disciple of Jesus, or not. It became thenceforward his duty, though not his interest, to preach the gospel as he did.

The truth of this observation appears from the case of Timothy in the text. Lois and Eunice were Jewesses, of the posterity of Jacob. When the gospel revelation was proposed to them, they received it as the mind of God, and professed it. This is the "unfeigned faith that first dwelled in them." And Timothy was to be commended for following them therein. He was in the right to receive a doctrine, that appeared excellent, and well supported, as being the fulfilment of ancient prophecies, and confirmed by miracles; though his father, as it seems, did not embrace this faith. For if he had, it is likely that St. Paul would have mentioned him here likewise. Nor does St. Luke in his brief history of these persons in the Acts give any intimation of it. All he says of Timothy's father is, that he was a "Greek, well reported of by the brethren," or Christians, "that were at Lystra and Iconium," Acts xvi. *beg.*

Here then we perceive, that Timothy is justified, and even commended for choosing the principles of true religion: though he had not the leading, or the concurring authority and example of his father. From a child he had known the scriptures of the Old Testament, having been instructed in them by his mother and grandmother of the posterity of Jacob, and by profession of the Jewish religion. And from the beginning he paid a great regard to those scriptures, till at length he also became a disciple of Jesus, and embraced the faith of the gospel.

And it is evident, that persons of mature age are obliged to receive what appears to be truth after serious and sufficient examination, and to do what they are convinced is the will of God, whether their parents consent or not. For there is a superior obligation to truth, and the will of God, to which all are subject.

If there be any defect of knowledge in those to whom any are obliged, they may endeavour to be better informed in the principles of religion, and the grounds of them. There may be occasion for them to be more open and explicit in the profession of religion, than those that went before them. They may aim at the strictest regard to the will of God, and excel in moderation and charity toward others. If they, by whom they have been brought up, appear to them morose and severe, and to stretch their authority beyond the bounds of reason: nothing hinders, but that they may aim at escaping that mistake, and exceed them in mildness and gentleness. There can be no good reason assigned, why children should not be better than their parents, if they are able: still preserving a humble and dutiful respect to a superior relation, which is a necessary part of true goodness, without which they cannot excel.

V. It is a great and singular happiness, when there is a general agreement and harmony in things of religion among friends and relatives, and the several branches of a family.

This happiness is not universal. It was not the case in this family. Nevertheless, it does not appear, that Timothy's father obstructed those who depended upon him in following their own convictions: nor that he hindered them from embracing any farther discoveries. Nay, it does not appear, that he opposed his son Timothy's undertaking the office of an evangelist, and accompanying the apostle Paul in his journies for promoting the gospel.

However, upon some occasions, there will be not only differences of sentiment, but much

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animosity in families, on account of the principles of religion. Says our Lord: "Suppose ye that I am come to send peace on earth! I tell you, nay; but rather divisions: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father: the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother," Luke xii. 51—53.

Sometimes children are disobedient, stubborn, and refractory. They forsake the guides of their youth, and are a grief of heart to those who have the most tender affection for them, and shew a wise concern for their true interest. They will not submit to authority, nor hearken to reason. They will not be persuaded by the most earnest and affectionate importunity to attend to the things that make for their welfare here or hereafter.

On the other hand, sometimes the progress of virtue is obstructed or discouraged by superiors in age and station: and the serious and well disposed bring upon themselves hardships by being more than ordinarily diligent and inquisitive in things of religion. Their superiors are not duly apprised of the rights of conscience: and the smallest difference of opinion is thought to deserve the keenest resentment. They who are the most sincere in their regard to the general obligations of religion, and most dutiful and respectful to their parents, from a principle of conscience, are nevertheless discouraged, because of difference in opinion upon some speculative points. This is an evil: and it is a trial which the virtue of some meets with.

There are also happy and desirable cases. When children readily receive the great truths and doctrines of religion, and the grounds of them, from their parents or other instructors: when they embrace the commandments, and walk therein, that they may live. This is most agreeable to those who have been concerned for them, and have laboured for their welfare. It must likewise be exceeding comfortable to those younger persons, or others in a state of dependence, upon whom the principles of religion have made a deep impression, to be encouraged and animated in their religious studies and inquiries by those whom they love, honour, and esteem.

In a word, it is a very agreeable circumstance, contributing as much to the happiness of this state of imperfection, as any thing that can be thought of, when there is agreement between friends and relatives in the great things of religion, with forbearance as to differences about lesser matters: when real holiness and true virtue have the highest regard: and difference of opinion about things of small moment, whether proceeding from want of understanding, or from greater measures of light and knowledge, produce no alienation of affection. For such a situation, every one who enjoys it, ought to be thankful. To be at liberty to do what our conscience dictates, without molestation from others, is a delightful privilege. Such have the persuasion of the divine favour and acceptance, and enjoy also the good will, approbation and encouragement of earthly friends. This makes duty easy. If it had been otherwise, they could not have drawn back. They would have been obliged, for the sake of Christ and his kingdom, to forsake father and mother, and all worldly possessions. But they have both the favour of God and of men; or at least the favour and good-will of those whom they most esteem.

I have mentioned these things as useful hints. Parents usually love those children best that advance themselves in the world. But true virtue and goodness ought to be the greatest recommendation: nor ought any advances therein to be discouraged.

Application. I hope the words of the text may be applied to you, my friends. I have no reason to doubt, but that the unfeigned faith, which first dwelt in your pious parents, is in you also, according to your years, and upon the ground of a rational evidence and conviction: and such a consideration gives joy and satisfaction.

But there can be no harm in recommending to you to cherish, maintain, and improve the principle of goodness. I apprehend that what has been now said, must have excited in you thanksgivings to God for the advantage you have had of a religious education: and that you have renewed your resolutions to improve it. And it is indeed prudent to be very serious and deliberate in resolving to walk with God, and persevere in the way of his commandments, all the days of our life. You should continue in the use of all the means of your establishment: and should carefully decline the snares that are dangerous to your virtue. If unawares you meet with them, and sinners entice you to evil, resolutely withhold your consent, and withstand their enticements and solicitations.

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You need not to be told, that children of such parents, of so many prayers, of such hopes and expectations, cannot sin at so easy a rate as others. In every step you should take, in the way of folly and sin, you would meet with checks and rebukes. And if you should break through, and harden yourselves against all the remonstrances of your enlightened conscience and understanding, the issue would be unutterable remorse and anguish.

But this, I trust, shall not be your case. Your goodness, I hope, shall not be like a "morning cloud, or the early dew, that soon passeth away," Hos. vi. 4, but rather be as the "dawning light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18.

May you then willingly admit and entertain the wholesome instructions of those who wish you well: and may you in the way of virtue ever have countenance and encouragement. But if you should meet with obstacles, may you surmount them, and be faithful to God. And having experienced some good portion of peace in the way of God's commandments on earth, may you and yours partake with all the people of God in the full rewards and everlasting joys of religion and virtue, which are sure, and are reserved for the world to come.

SERMON IX.

THE VIRTUE AND BENEFIT OF EARLY PIETY, OR FEARING THE LORD FROM THE YOUTH.

——*But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.*—1 Kings xviii. 12.

Though this character be here given by the person himself, we are not immediately to admit the suspicion of pride and vanity. What he says is only for the sake of self-preservation. If we never commend ourselves for a less weighty reason, we shall not incur the just censure of boasting and vain-glory.

The person is Obadiah, whose history we have in the former part of this chapter. He is now speaking to the prophet Elijah: and the thing happened in the time of the long dearth in the reign of Ahab king of Israel.

At the beginning of the chapter it is said: "And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying: Go, shew thyself unto Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab: and there was a sore famine in Samaria. And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house."

Some have put the question, whether this be the same as Obadiah the prophet. But it does not appear that this person had at all the prophetical character. And Obadiah, whose short book of prophecies we have among the lesser prophets near the end of the Old Testament, seems to have lived a good deal later than the reign of Ahab.

It follows in verse third and fourth: "Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly. For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and gave them bread and water."

By prophets, as is generally supposed, we are not here to understand inspired persons, with a special commission from God: but men educated in the schools of the prophets. These Jezebel looked upon as her enemies, because they opposed her idolatrous worship, and taught the people the true religion. And, possibly, she suspected them of favouring the interests of the kingdom of Judah, where was the appointed place of worship for all the tribes of Israel.

It was therefore an act of great piety, and much resolution, in Obadiah, in a time of such danger, to protect those prophets. "He hid them by fifty in a cave, and gave them bread and water:" that is, all needful provisions, sending them meat and drink privately every day.

Ver. 5, 6. "And Ahab said unto Obadiah: Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks. Peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. So they divided the land between them, to pass through it. Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself."

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Obadiah was the only person in the service of Ahab whom he could confide in upon this occasion. It is a proof of the great regard which even this wicked prince had for him. And it affords good reason for us to suppose, that Obadiah had been wont to behave with singular fidelity, and uncommon discretion, in all affairs in which he was employed.

Ver. 7—12. "And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him. And he knew him, and fell on his face and said: Art thou my lord Elijah?" He was not a little surprised to meet Elijah, who for some time had lived very privately out of the reach of Ahab. "And he answered him: I am. Go tell thy lord: Behold Elijah is here. And he said: What have I sinned, that thou wouldst deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab to slay me? As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord has not sent to seek thee. And when they said, he is not here, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And thou sayest: Go, tell thy lord, behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not. And so when I come, and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me."

The message, with which Elijah sent Obadiah, would be very grateful to king Ahab, who had earnestly sought for him. But Obadiah, supposing that the prophet could not appear before Ahab with safety, feared, lest by divine direction, he should, when he was gone away, remove to some other place. He excuseth himself therefore from delivering this message. And he pleads with the prophet, that he should not expose him to so imminent danger of death, by provoking the displeasure of Ahab. Thus he speaks in the text, and the words following: ver. 12—16. "But, I thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did, when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets, by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go tell thy lord: behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me. And Elijah said: As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand," or whom I serve, "I will shew myself to him this day. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him. And Ahab went to meet Elijah."

"But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth." Or, "But thy servant feareth the Lord from his youth." Which is a more literal translation: for the word I is not in the original.

I. I now propose first to explain the words, and shew what is implied "in fearing the Lord from the youth."

II. Secondly to shew the virtue of so doing.

III. And thirdly the benefit of it.

I. I would shew, what is implied in "fearing the Lord from the youth."

It may include these four things, believing in God: worshipping him, and making an open profession of religion: observing the precepts of true religion, or making the will of God, so far as we are acquainted with it, the rule of our conduct: and doing this constantly from early age.

1. Fearing the Lord implies believing God: or, that Jehovah, the Lord, is the one living and true God. "He that cometh to God," says the apostle to the Hebrews, "must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6. So much Obadiah intends here to say of himself: that he always had a persuasion in his mind, that there is a God, and one God: which one God he believed to be the God of the patriarchs, the God who protected them, and whom they owned and served; the God that brought Israel out of Egypt, and delivered his laws and statutes to them by the hand of Moses.

He believed God to be the creator of the heavens and the earth, the sea and all things that are therein. His own reason led him to conceive of God in this manner. The books of Moses, that great prophet of the people of Israel, and most eminent servant of the true God, confirmed the belief of this truth. The creation of the world is related at the beginning of the writings of that lawgiver. And this notion of God is inserted distinctly in one of the ten commandments, the fourth in order, delivered with so great solemnity. He therefore, who in the preface to to those commandments says: "I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt," is the creator of the whole world, and consequently the rightful Lord and disposer of all things therein.

This one consideration of God, as creator, would lead the thoughtful and pious person, here spoken of, to distinct apprehensions of every attribute and perfection, every notion and character of the Deity, that renders him the proper object of worship, obedience, trust and confidence.

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He was persuaded, that to God belongs power, and that he is able to do whatever he pleaseth in heaven and on earth. He knew what David inculcated upon his son Solomon, that God "searcheth all hearts, that if men seek him, he will be found of them, and that if they forsake him, he will cast them off for ever," 1 Chron. xxviii. 9; or, as the apostle in the words before cited, "that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

2. In fearing God the Lord, is implied worshipping him, or making an open profession of true religion. Obadiah so feared the Lord, as to worship him, and no other. It was known to Ahab, and to all his people in general, especially those who were in the chief city, and at court, that he feared the Lord.

He worshipped and served God according to the rules of reason, and the directions of the law of Moses, the revelation that had been made to the people of Israel. It was the first of the principal commandments of that law. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The next commandment is: "Thou shalt not make unto thyself a graven image, the likeness of any thing. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, and serve them." And according to those laws, given to the people of Israel by Jehovah, as their king and governor, he who worshipped any other God was to be cut off from his people. This person respected those laws, and the sanctions by which they were enforced: and though many did not regard them, he did. He was persuaded, that God was able to reward the obedient and punish transgressors.

In the following chapter Elijah, lamenting his case, says, he "only was left," 1 Kings xix. 14. But God assures him, that "he had left to him seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that had not bowed unto Baal," ver. 18. Obadiah was one of these, but more known as a worshipper and servant of the true God, than many of that number.

3. Fearing the Lord implies observing the precepts of true religion, or making the will of God, so far as we are acquainted with it, the rule of our conduct.

This is an ordinary meaning of the fear of the Lord in scripture. It includes all religion in general. At least obedience is represented as so connected with fearing God, as to be a necessary concomitant, or immediate effect of it. For it is said, that "the fear of the Lord is to depart from evil," Prov. viii. 13. Again, "By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil," ch. xvi. 6. And "Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty," or concern "of man," Ecc. xii. 13.

So Moses instructed the people under his care: "Now these are the commandments, and statutes, and judgments, which the Lord your God commanded to teach you: that thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all his statutes and commandments, which I command thee," Deut. vi. 1, 2.

For certain, religion, or the fear of God, is not a speculative science. It lies not barely in admiring thoughts and sublime conceptions of the Deity. God is not only a being of great power and understanding, but he is also a righteous, holy being; true, gracious, merciful. And a true worshipper of God is led to an imitation of him in those perfections. All hopes of his favour depend upon a conformity to him therein. And truth, righteousness, and goodness, are the great things in those laws which have been delivered by his authority.

Such an one the person in the text evidently was. There was no one besides, in whom Ahab could so safely confide for an upright and conscientious discharge of any office and commission in which the welfare of his kingdom was concerned.

4. It is here also said of Obadiah, that he feared the Lord from his youth; that is, from very early age to that time. As soon as he was arrived to a full exercise of his reason, and came to be sensible of moral obligations, he had by his own voluntary and sedate judgment and choice signified his approbation of the great truths, and principles, and precepts of religion. From the beginning he had been persuaded, that the Lord Jehovah is God alone; and all his days he had worshipped and served him as the one true God, and loved him with all his heart and soul: esteeming his service the most honourable, the most delightful, and the most profitable service which any creature can be engaged in. He had likewise in the whole course of his life had a strict and conscientious respect to the great rules of right and wrong. Such had been his early resolution and practice: and the rest of his life to that time was of the same tenour.

I presume I do not put too much into the description of this property, fearing the Lord; or the character of the person here spoken of. I have studiously avoided so doing. We are not obliged to conceive of Obadia, as perfect, or without sin: but he was upright, he truly feared

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God, and sincerely respected all his laws. He had been free from great transgressions: and the failing, or offences of a lesser kind, which he had been surprised into, were not allowed of, nor persisted in.

This is what is implied in fearing God from the youth.

II. In the next place we are to observe the virtue of this.

1. It was partly owing to a quick discernment of the truth and value of things. The things of religion were controverted in his time. The grounds and reasons of the worship of Jehovah and Baal were debated. Or if the idolatrous worship of Baal was not begun in Israel, in his early youth, it is, nevertheless, likely that there were some questions put concerning the high places set up by Jeroboam, who had been followed in some measure by all, or most of the succeeding kings of Israel. Obadiah soon discerned the merits of the controversy. By the help of a good understanding he readily perceived who ought to be worshipped as the true God, and what is the most acceptable way of worshipping, and wherein true religion principally consists.

2. He gave a serious attention to the things of religion, and carefully weighed and examined them. His right choice was not solely owing to a quick understanding and ready apprehension. But he used diligence and application. He perceived religion to be a weighty concern, and he bestowed many serious thoughts upon it. He was early sensible, that a right determination at first would have a great effect on the rest of his life.

If he had the advantage of good instructions from the beginning, he did not neglect them, but attended to them, meditated upon them, and let those things which appeared reasonable sink down in his heart. Moreover, as he had opportunity, he studied the laws of God, recorded in those scriptures, which were in the hands of the people of Israel. And he read with a mind open to conviction, resolving to receive what appeared to be the will of God, and act according to it: whether it should be for his own present interest, and tend to his promotion and advancement in the world, or not. By this means his judgment was well informed, and his resolutions settled upon a firm foundation.

I make no scruple of mentioning this particular here; for I think there is good ground for it. Without this, it is not easy to conceive how Obadiah's conduct should have been such as it was.

And certainly this ought to be observed by young persons. It is desirable to understand some art or business by which men may subsist in the world. It is also desirable to understand the things of religion. They who have a quick apprehension, have a great advantage, provided they apply their thoughts this way. Nevertheless, there are few or none, but may attain to a competent knowledge of the great truths and obligations of religion, and the grounds of them, if they are attentive, and seriously inquisitive about them. Moses reminds the people of Israel: "The commandment, which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it afar off: but it is nigh thee, that thou mayest hear it and do it," Deut. xxx. 11, 12. The revelation of the gospel, superadded to that of the law, is not designed to make the principles of religion more abstruse and difficult: but more easy, more intelligible, more affecting, which must be for the good of all men.

3. Obadiah's fearing the Lord from his youth was partly owing to a fixed purpose and resolution of acting according to the rule of right, and that no temptations of any kind should induce him to act contrary to his sedate judgment.

We may well put this into the character we are observing. In the course of his life there had offered to him temptations of various kinds: some suited to youthful affections, others more especially suited to the common and prevailing passions of mature age. But in every stage of life his conduct had been uniformly religious: and though he lived at a time when multitudes did evil, he had not followed them. Though the way of religion was then a strait path, and almost deserted, his feet had not declined from the way of it. We cannot but conclude from hence, that the resolution of Obadiah was very firm.

4. We do also reasonably suppose, that this steady good conduct was not without constant circumspection and watchfulness. Indeed, we are all encompassed with snares, which makes it needful to be upon our guard. Undoubtedly this person had "kept his heart with diligence," Prov. iv. 23. He had attended to the frame of his mind. He used his best endeavours to maintain the fervour of his love to God, and a sincere respect for his laws. His mind was carefully

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kept free from ambition and covetousness: and he looked with a jealous eye upon every thing and person, that tended to abate his zeal for God and religion, and lessen his abhorrence for that which is evil.

This temper of watchfulness he had preserved always, by which means he had been greatly assisted in fearing God from his youth.

III. In the third place I should shew the benefit of so fearing the Lord. But I need not enlarge, having had frequent occasions to touch upon this point.

1. They who fear the Lord from their youth up, enjoy the pleasure and comfort of a religious life: which is no small advantage. For, as Solomon says of wisdom, "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," Prov. iii. 17. Such have the satisfaction of approving themselves to God, and doing the things that please the Sovereign of the world. Their minds are rightly disposed, and their conduct approves itself to their own judgment. And they avoid the bitterness of that repentance which is necessary for those who have greatly strayed from wisdom's ways.

2. They who fear God from their youth may, and often do become eminent in piety. Their continued practice of virtue renders them perfect in it. So was this person. It appears from the account which we have of him here. The writer of the history in the book of Kings observes it to his honour expressly: "Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly. His virtuous habits were confirmed, and almost above temptation. He had a post of high honour: but he possessed it without any sinful compliances. Nor did he at all conceal his regard for God and true religion: but was known to be a worshipper of the God of heaven. When his prophets, who were most zealous for God, and taught the people the knowledge of him, were in danger, at the hazard of all his own interests, he took care of them; he hid them from their persecutors, and provided for them. At the same time his disinterestedness and integrity in public affairs, and the discharge of civil offices, was so conspicuous, that he was chief minister to a prince who was an enemy to his religious principles. By which we perceive, that Obadiah knew how to give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, without denying to God what was due to him. In a word, this person, who had "feared God from his youth," was now eminent in the various parts of good conduct, and ready to every good word and work.

3. They who fear God from their youth, especially if it be with much steadiness, are useful in the world many ways. Such men promote the good of society in their several stations. They also adorn, and recommend religion to others. By their means some are brought into a good liking of its ways: or are induced to consider and examine its pretensions, till they find them just and reasonable. Others are confirmed, and they persevere with joy and resolution. It is very likely, that many pious Israelites were animated and encouraged by the example of Obadiah: though their circumstances were such, that they could not all act with the same openness that he did. They were obliged to greater privacy. But yet they did not bow the knee to Baal, or render him any act of homage.

4. They who fear God from their youth have the happiness of being always prepared for the various events of providence. If they are removed hence, their end is peace, and their reward is sure. If they live, they go on to perform the duties of life: and are the best qualified of any men to bear the troubles and afflictions of this state with a calm and composed mind, and comfortable trust in God. For "God is their refuge, and their portion in the land of the living," Ps. cxlii. 5. "They have none in heaven but him. Nor is there any upon earth whom they desire in comparison of him. And when flesh and heart fail, God is the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever," Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.

APPLICATION. What has been now observed should induce all, whatever is their age of life, to fear the Lord.

They who are in early age have encouragement to give up themselves to God now, without delay, and to fear and serve him henceforward all the days of their life. There is great virtue in so doing. And it will be attended with very desirable advantages. None will discourage them from being early in this design. They who have feared God from their youth, will readily assure them, that it is the wisest thing that can be done. They who are now serious and religious at length, after trying the ways of sin, will likewise assure them, that if they neglect the present

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opportunity, and defer to come to a full determination, and form effectual resolutions of obedience to all God's commandments; that delay will sometime be matter of grief and bitter lamentation.

This discourse may then be considered as an invitation to young persons, to be truly religious without delay: to weigh and consider the things of religion seriously, and to determine accordingly: to "remember now their Creator in the days of their youth," Ecc. xii. 1, and to serve him constantly with inviolable fidelity.

But it suggests no discouragements to others who have as yet deferred. It does indeed shew, in some measure, the evil of procrastination. But it does not insinuate, that there is no hope or remedy for those who have long delayed.

They who have feared God from their youth have some distinction. They were early wise, and they have proceeded in wisdom's paths. But they are not taught to boast, or say scornfully, They are not as other men. They likewise have failings: and do own, that if God were strict to mark iniquity, they could not be justified in his sight. Their hopes therefore are founded in the mercy of God. They believe, and it is what they would recommend to the consideration of others, that "with God there is forgiveness, that he may be feared," Ps. cxxx. 4, and served by such weak and fallible creatures as we are.

Goodness is as certainly a property of the Deity, as any other. If sinful men "forsake the evil of their ways, and" unfeignedly "return to God," they will find rest for their souls: for "he will have mercy upon them, and will abundantly pardon," Is. lv. 7.

SERMON X.

A FUTURE STATE PROVEABLE BY REASON.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Psalm lxxxiv. 11.

"The Lord God is a sun." He is not only glorious and excellent in himself: but from him issue streams of knowledge and wisdom, joy and comfort. Whatever the sun is to the material world, that God is in the most eminent manner to his people.

He is also "a shield." God is not only a light to guide and direct, but likewise a shield to protect and defend. He can secure us in the midst of dangers, and defend from the violent and artful designs and attempts of enemies.

"The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." He will bestow every kind of good, both favour and honour. Nor will he give sparingly: but will plentifully enrich, and abundantly bless them that walk uprightly.

By which uprightness is not meant absolute perfection, but sincerity; serving God in truth, and with a willing mind; and having a respect to all his commandments: not only observing, very punctually, ordinances of positive appointment, and the stated seasons of public worship: but living in the practice of all righteousness. It is, to be faithful to God in all circumstances, in prosperity and adversity, and in the general tenour of our life and conversation. Such as these God will abundantly bless.

Having thus briefly explained these words, I shall mention some observations.

I. Here is a property of the Divine Being, which deserves our serious attention. As God is full and perfect in himself, so he favours, and has a special regard for righteous and upright men.

The Psalmist, and other good men, who lived under the Mosaic dispensation, did, possibly, expect temporal advantages for the truly religious, more than it is reasonable for us to do under the gospel. But in general the observation must be right: the truth of it may be depended

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upon, and ought to be maintained in all times: that "God loveth righteousness; his countenance beholds the upright," Ps. xi. 7. These he approves and favours; whilst he is displeased with such as wilfully transgress, or contemptuously neglect and disregard his holy laws.

II. We should improve this truth for our establishment in the steady and delightful practice of all holiness.

Virtue, real righteousness, has an intrinsic excellence: it is fit in itself, and very becoming. But we ought to take in every other consideration that tends to secure the practice of virtue, and perseverance therein, in this state of temptation. We should strengthen ourselves by a respect to the divine will, as well as by a regard to the reason of things.

When we do so, mindful of the divine authority, desirous of his favour, and fearing his displeasure, we may be said to walk with God. There will be then a comfortable fellowship between God and his rational creatures. We steadily and conscientiously eye his commands. He graciously approves us, and the way we are in: and will manifest himself favourably to us.

III. We may hence receive encouragement to trust in God, and serve him faithfully in every circumstance of life, even though we are in some difficulties and troubles, as the Psalmist now was.

For virtue, though well pleasing to God, may be tried and exercised. The reward is sure, though deferred: and it may be the greater in the end, if by afflictions it be refined, improved and perfected.

IV. This text may teach men to be cautious how they injure, offend, or grieve any sincere and upright persons whom God approves.

It is spoken of as a remarkable instance of the folly of bad men: "Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people, as they eat bread, and call not upon God!" Ps. xiv. 4.

We ought to be careful how we offend any walking in the way of righteousness: though they appear to us to be mistaken in some things. It must be imprudent to oppose those who have God for a sun and shield. At the same time it appears to be our duty to uphold to the utmost of our power the cause of the righteous. This seems to be what David engages to do, if settled in peace and prosperity. "O my soul, thou hast said unto God: Thou art my Lord. My goodness extendeth not unto thee, but unto the saints that are in the earth, even to the excellent, in whom is all my delight," Ps. xvi. 2, 3. 'I have always trusted in God: and it has 'been my unfeigned desire to serve him. Not that I thereby merit of him. Nor is he advan-'taged by my services. But I shall think it a happiness, if ever I have it in my power to pro-'tect and encourage upright men, whom I sincerely love and esteem.'

V. We are also led to observe upon these words, that from the divine perfections may be argued a future state of recompenses.

This observation I intend to enlarge upon.

1. In the first place I shall propose an argument for a future state from reason.
2. I shall consider some objections against this doctrine.
3. I will endeavour to answer divers inquiries relating to this matter.
4. And then conclude with some inferences.

1.) The argument from reason in behalf of a future state of recompenses is to this purpose.

It appears to us agreeable to the perfections of God, that he should shew favour to good and virtuous men. But it is obvious to all, and more especially evident to careful observers, that good and bad men are not much distinguished in this world. This, I say, is obvious to all, and especially manifest to those whose observations are of the greatest compass: who have considered the consequences of virtue and vice, relating to this life: who have compared the conduct of good and bad with the prosperous or afflictive circumstances they have been in: who have taken notice of the rules and maxims, the successes and disappointments of the great and small, the high and low of mankind.

How frequent and copious upon this head is Solomon, who had himself enjoyed so much power and grandeur, and had been very curious in his remarks upon men and things! "All things have I seen in the days of my vanity. There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness: and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness," Ecc. vii. 15. And, "there is a vanity, which is done upon the earth, that there be just men, unto whom it hap-

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peneth according to the work of the wicked," ch. viii. 14. "And there be wicked men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. No man knoweth love or hatred by all that is before him. All things come alike to all. There is one event to the righteous, and the wicked:——to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not. As is the good, so is the sinner——This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun. There is one event unto all," ch. ix. 1—3.

And afterwards: "This wisdom have I seen under the sun: and it seemed great unto me. There was a little city, and few men within it: and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man: and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no man remembered that same poor man," ver. 13—15. If the place had been saved by some rich citizen, the performance would have been applauded: and honour, and many distinguishing advantages would have been heaped upon him. But the great and eminent wisdom of the poor man was despised and forgotten, because of his mean condition. Such is the partiality of men! such their respect for outward appearances! So that suitable recompenses are not to be looked for from fellow-creatures, in proportion to virtue, or wisdom, from any considerations whatever, either of gratitude or interest.

These and other things said by Solomon, are not proposed with a view to disparage the divine government. For, notwithstanding all these disorders and inequalities in the present scene of things, he is persuaded of the righteousness, and of the remunerative, rewarding providence of God in due time. For which reason he shuts up his book with that important advice: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God, and keep his commandments. For this is the whole of man:" his whole duty, or his whole interest and happiness. "For God will bring every work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." And indeed, in the course of his observations, in that work, he more than once asserts the righteousness of God, and his favourable respect to good men. "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged: yet surely I know, that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him," viii. 12.

I forbear to recite any passages at length from any of the Psalms: in which the prosperity of bad men, and the afflictions and sufferings of the righteous are taken notice of. See Ps. xvii. and lxxiii.

With regard then to this inquiry: whether the reason of men, or light of nature, teaches a future state of recompenses: we may put the issue upon this one question: "Can we maintain the perfections of God, and the wisdom of his government, upon the supposition, that there is to be no future state of recompense for good or bad? Would it be agreeable to his wisdom, his righteousness, and goodness, "that all things should always come alike to all? and that there should be finally one and the same event to the good and the bad?" If it be not, then we may be assured there is another state after this. For we are persuaded of the perfection of the Deity. We have antecedent proof of this in the reason of things. God is as certainly wise, and holy, as he is knowing and powerful. It may be righteous and equitable to permit virtue to be tried with afflictions and sorrows for a while: but it cannot be consistent with the perfection and rectitude of the Divine Being, the creator and governor of the world, to suffer good men to perish finally in their righteousness.

It may be said, that virtue has a reward in this world. For it is in itself an excellence and perfection: and cannot but be chosen by every rational and considerate person. And, if it be chosen and preferred, it must be an advantage, and contain in itself its own reward.

And it must be owned, that virtue is excellent, and therefore is approved. But yet it is exposed to many difficulties in this world, where iniquity is frequent: where there is abundance of partiality, and ingratitude, and perpetual emulation and contention: where success and prosperity are not annexed to any good dispositions, nor to the most valuable services. As Solomon says: "Wisdom is better than weapons of war. But one sinner destroyeth much good," Ecc. ix. 18.

Nor can it be allowed to be fit, that he who has a strict regard to the reason of things, who conscientiously endeavours to perform his duty to God and man, and laments all the neglects and trangressions which at any time he falls into, should upon the whole, and in the end, at the most, have only some small degree of happiness above those who without reluctance break through all the obligations of reason and religion. Would this be answerable to the descriptions

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of the divine perfection, sometimes given by wise and good men? Would it be suitable to the instruction in the text, and the consequence thence deduced? "The Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

Man is the most excellent part of this lower creation. His rational faculties give him a vast superiority above the rest of the beings on this earth. Nevertheless, he is on some accounts the least provided for of any, if there be no future state: and his rational powers the least of all taken care of. He has a discernment between good and evil: and a power of choosing the one, and refusing the other. He is therefore the subject of moral government, and accountable to his Creator, who is all-knowing, and all-powerful. But this moral government of the Divine Being would be very imperfectly administered if there are to be no other distinctions made between good and bad, than those in this present life.

Supposing such a being formed, as just described, he will certainly be rewarded or punished, according to his choice and conduct. As that is not done now, it is reasonable to expect that it shall be done hereafter in another state.

A learned writer discoursing on this very point, has this observation. 'Were there to be 'no life hereafter, every man would undoubtedly be happy or unhappy here in proportion to 'his virtues and vices. All the events and dispensations of Providence would turn upon this 'hinge, and the blessings of heaven be distributed by this rule. But since we find it in fact very 'much otherwise, the doctrine before us seems as clear and certain, as that God "loveth 'righteousness, and hateth iniquity."

What encouragement would there be to deny present appetite and inclination? or to forego private interest for the sake of the public? What inducement could there be, with present self-denial, to seek the happiness of particular persons, if there be no future recompenses?

What profit could there be of the study of virtue? What inducement to advance therein, if the progress of it is to come to an end at death, and can last no longer, at the utmost, than the period of this very short and uncertain life? What benefit has such a one from his labour and application in the highest design conceivable? What profit has he of his labour, who has contemplated the divine perfections, who has considered the reason of things, the beauty of virtue, and the deformity of its contrary: who has moderated and subdued his affections, till he has gained in a great measure the conquest of anger, ill-will, envy, and every passion, or degree of it, that is unworthy his nature? What profit, I say, is there of this labour and increase, if this noble design is to come to an end at the period of this mortal life?

This might be an indelible blemish on the divine government, if it could be supposed. For it is as easy for God to raise to another life, or to continue the rational life, the thinking power, as to bestow it at first.

This argument therefore for a future state, which reason affords from the consideration of the divine perfections, and the circumstances of things in this world, is conclusive.

It is also obvious. And accordingly different recompenses for good and bad, in another state after this, have been the general belief and expectation of all nations and people upon the face of the earth. And hereby some have been animated to great and generous actions: and have been induced, with much disinterestedness, to promote religious truth, and virtuous conduct among their fellow-citizens and countrymen: and have at length freely and deliberately submitted to sufferings from overruling power and malice: when by compliance with the majority, and recanting the principles they had recommended, they might have saved themselves, and obtained preferment.

2.) I shall now consider objections.

Obj. 1. It may be said: did not some of the ancient heathens, and particularly some of the philosophers, dispute or deny this doctrine?

To which I answer, that some persons entering far into abstruse and metaphysical speculations about the Deity, and matter, and the human soul: and taking offence at the vulgar, prevailing sentiments concerning future rewards and punishments, as low and mean, might dispute the truth of this expectation, or admit of doubts about it. But that future recompenses were

[a] Five Sermons, &c. p. 84, 85.

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the common belief of heathen people, is evident from many ancient writings still extant. And if some, and those of reputed knowledge and learning, did by some discourses weaken this expectation, it does not follow, that there was no good foundation for it in reason. For it is not uncommon for men, by prejudice and false reasonings, to be misled against evidence: as we still see among Christians. The Sadducees in our Saviour's time denied the resurrection of the body, and all rewards after this life. But yet it cannot be said, that the Jewish people at that time had no good reason to expect another life after this.

Obj. 2. St. Paul says, that Jesus Christ "had abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel," 2 Tim. i. 10. True. But these expressions are to be understood comparatively, not absolutely: as if a future state of immortal life had been altogether hid from men till the coming of Christ. For it is certain, that among the Jews at least there were expectations of a resurrection, and of eternal life. And the apostle to the Hebrews, speaking of the ancient patriarchs, says: "they confessed, that they were pilgrims and strangers on the earth: and looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God," Heb. xi. 10, 13. The meaning therefore of that text is, in general, that the doctrine of a future state had been set in a much clearer light by the gospel than before.

Obj. 3. St. Paul writing to the Christians at Ephesus, who were once in the darkness of heathenism, reminds them: "that at that time they were without Christ, being alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12.

But these expressions should not be understood absolutely, as if those persons had not, and could not have any knowledge of God, or hopes from him. For in the epistle to the Romans the apostle says of Gentile people, that "whereas they knew God, they glorified him not as God;" and that "they knew the judgment of God," though they did not act accordingly, Rom. i. 21, 22. Therefore those Ephesians also, before their conversion to Christianity, were without God, and without hope, comparatively. They had not that knowledge, and that hope, which they now had through the gospel, nor which the Jews had; they having been, in their Gentile state, strangers from the covenants of promise, delivered to that people.

Obj. 4. Still it may be urged: would it not be more for the honour of the gospel, to suppose, that a future state is an entirely new discovery? Would it not tend to induce people, who have only the light of nature, to embrace the Christian religion, if they were told, that they have not any ground at all for the belief of a future life, and that revelation alone can give men hopes of it?

I answer: no. This would not be of use. If you met a heathen, who already had an apprehension of future recompenses for good and bad: [which is certainly the general expectation of all people upon the face of the earth: though their ideas may be low and imperfect, yet however somewhat inviting and agreeable for the good, and disagreeable and frightful for the bad;] would you venture to tell him, that he has no foundation for such a belief? and that it is to be had from the gospel only? I think we should be cautious of saying any thing which would tend to diminish in men honourable apprehensions of the Deity.

It cannot but be of advantage for men to have honourable sentiments of God, as a Being of wisdom, power, righteousness, goodness and equity. Otherwise, what reason can they have to receive a revelation which may be depended upon as true and genuine?

And it must always be sufficient to induce men to receive a revelation, to shew them, that it has uncontested marks and evidences of a divine original, from miraculous works performed in support of it: and that it affords men many advantages, superior to those of the light of nature.

Accordingly, St. Paul was not wont to deny or contest, but to improve the natural notions which men had of religion. This we perceive in his discourse at Athens, saying: "God that made the world, and all things therein, does not dwell in temples made with hands: neither is he worshipped with men's hands, as if he needed any thing:" and, that "he is not far from every one of us," Acts xvii. 24, 25. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being. As certain also of your own poets have said: for we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think, that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device," ver. 27—29. And in another discourse to heathen people he says: "God had not [in former times] left himself without witness, [though he had not given

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them an express revelation,] forasmuch as he did good, and gave us rain, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness," chap. xiv. 17.

And it seems to me, that St. Paul often argues the truth and certainty of future recompenses in a rational way, much in the same manner that we have now done, from the consideration of the present state of things, and the perfections of the Divine Being: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven——to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel," 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. This, he says, is a righteous thing with God: that is, it is reasonable, and fit, and becoming the divine perfection.

And in the epistle to the Hebrews it is said: "He that cometh to God, must believe, that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6. Which is as much as to say, that there can be no religion without believing, that God is, and that he is a rewarder of virtuous and upright, and an avenger of evil men. If therefore the light of nature does not teach these principles, there can be no natural religion: and they who have not the benefit of revelation, are excusable in their irregularities. But that is contrary to the apostle's long and full argument at the beginning of the epistle to the Romans. Where he says: "That which may be known of God is manifest in them:——For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. So that they are without excuse: because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God," Rom. i. 19—21. And again: "As many as have sinned without law," that is, who have not had the benefit of revelation, "shall also perish without law," chap. ii. 12. They shall not be judged by a revealed law, but by the laws and rules of reason only.

3.) In the third place I proposed to take notice of some inquiries relating to this matter. But they shall be these three only, as of special moment.

Question 1. What notion could men form of the future recompenses of good and bad by the light of reason?

I answer: it is highly probable, that their ideas would fall much short of those which revelation is able to afford. But, in general, men might refer themselves to the judgment of God, as equitable and impartial. They would, it is likely, suppose the virtuous to be separated from the wicked: and whilst these are punished with a variety of torments, they would conceive the virtuous to be disposed of in some delightful regions, and abodes, enjoying intellectual entertainments, or the pleasures of the mind: improving themselves and one another in agreeable conversation, and contemplating the Deity, the all-perfect mind, and those works of his with which they are acquainted, and continually advancing in the discovery of truth, and the improvement of virtuous habits.

Q. 2. Does reason afford any ground to suppose, that the future state of happiness for good men will be eternal, or of perpetual duration?

I think it does. For life, which is to come to an end, is not a reward for a rational being, who aspires to immortality. The period in view, though at the distance of many years, or ages, as we now compute time, would blast every enjoyment, and reduce the happiness of the most agreeable situation to nothing, and render it mere vanity and emptiness.

Moreover, we suppose, these beings, in a state of recompense, to be past a state of trial, and to be so confirmed in virtue, and to be so much out of the way of temptations, as to be in little or no danger of transgressing any reasonable laws, and of thereby offending God. What reason then can be assigned, why they should be removed, or their condition be altered for the worse?

Once more: these virtuous beings, once placed in a state of great advantage, will be continually improving in knowledge and virtue. The temper of the mind, and their adorations, and all their services, will be more and more perfect and delightful; and also more acceptable to the Deity. Their love of God is continually growing more and more ardent, and their desire toward him more strong and vehement. How contrary to reason is it to suppose, that these so improved beings should be at length destroyed or annihilated, with the approbation and by the almighty power of God!

As the learned writer, before cited, says: 'The longer virtuous men live in such a state, 'the fitter they must be for life: and therefore we may presume, the less will be the danger of

[a] As before, p. 95.

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'extinction. Their faculties must grow, their capacities enlarge, and all their improvements 'increase, through every part of duration. Great advances must be ever made in knowledge, 'virtue and happiness. They must be continually more and more capable of contemplating, 'admiring and enjoying the Author of all good, and the fountain of all perfection. To imagine, 'after this progress, and these exaltations of nature, that God should cut the thread of their 'existence, and put an end to their being, is to suppose him acting, so far as we can judge, con-'trary to the reason of things, and the chief ends of the creation.'

Q. 3. Does reason teach us to hope, that good men may pass directly into a state of happiness after death? Or, does it not leave room to apprehend, that imperfectly good men must after this life undergo some farther trial for their purification, before they enter upon a state of unmixed happiness, free from all grief and pain?

Here I apprehend reason to be at a loss: and that it must leave this point undecided. All that can be done is for men, in that case, to resign themselves to God, and refer themselves to his equitable judgment and disposal: hoping, and believing, (if they have here endeavoured to approve themselves to him by an upright conversation) that he will not leave them utterly to perish: and that he will some time, either immediately after death, or after some farther trials and purifications, admit and advance them to a condition of much comfort and joy.

I presume, this may be a just solution of this question. We may be confirmed in it by the consideration, that the doctrine of transmigrations has been very common among those who have had no other instruction than the light of nature.

4. I shall now conclude with the four following reflections.

1.) We hence perceive, that we have great reason to be thankful to God for the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Wherein there is so clear and affecting evidence of another life, suited to the capacities of all men: and also a just and attractive representation of the glory and happiness of it. A future state, as ascertained, and described in the gospel, affords the best support under the afflictions, and the best assistance against the temptations of this world.

2.) This discourse may confirm our faith in the gospel revelation, and the assurances it gives of everlasting happiness for them that walk uprightly, or that believe in Jesus Christ, and obey his commandments.

Christians who exercise their rational powers, and perceive the principles of revelation to be reasonable, cannot but be firmly established in the belief of them. They have the evidence of a two-fold argument: reason, and divine authority. Though the representation, which revelation gives of the future happiness for good men, surpasseth all that mere reason could encourage to hope for, that creates no difficulty. The thing is received with ready assent. God does not appear worse, but better; more gracious, more bountiful, than the reason of men alone presumed to think. And the mind being enlarged by the discoveries of revelation, it cheerfully admits the noblest and most delightful idea of the future recompenses.

3.) This argument may deserve the serious consideration of those who reject revelation.

For whether there be any revelation from God or not, there will be a reckoning, and suitable retributions after this life. Reason teaches as much beyond the possibility of a fair confutation, or well grounded doubt and question. You will come into judgment after death, and receive according to the things done in the body. Let not then any shyness of that awful proceeding, which the gospel speaks of, in a general day of judgment, form any unhappy prejudice in the minds of any. For reason itself teaches, that the actions of men will pass under a review, either in public, in one general judgment, or in particular: and that a retribution will be made accordingly.

Let all therefore attentively consider the evidences of the gospel revelation. For if it be attested by good evidence, and should be rejected by men, to whom it is proposed, this is one thing of which they will give an account.

4.) Lastly, the argument from reason in behalf of future recompenses, may be made use of as a warning to some weak and inconsiderate Christians: and establish the persuasion, that "without holiness no man shall see God," or attain to happiness in a future state.

The cogent argument for a future state, now proposed, is founded upon the divine perfections. God is not here, in this world, an avenger of evil, or a rewarder of good, so fully as is reasonable to expect. Consequently there will be another state, and farther recompenses for good and bad, according to their works here. No revelation therefore can propose an act of

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grace for obstinate and impenitent sinners. Reason and Revelation concur, and are entirely harmonious. Both say: "There is no peace to the wicked." And: "It shall be well with the righteous." But revelation excels in the justness of its descriptions of the misery of the one, and the happiness of the other.

SERMON XI.

THE GOSPEL THE TRUE WAY OF SALVATION.

And they said: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
Acts xvi. 31.

THESE words contain an answer to a very important question: "What must I do to be saved?" And we have reason to think, that it is here rightly answered. It does therefore deserve our serious and attentive observation.

St. Paul was now at Philippi, a Roman colony, and large city in Macedonia; where he preached the gospel, without any very great molestation that we know of, till he healed the indisposition of the maiden said to have a "spirit of divination:" by whom some artful men had made profit, pretending to answer the curious inquiries of people concerning divers matters. These, now deprived of farther gain in that way, raised a clamour against the apostle, and those with him, saying, that "they troubled the city, and taught customs contrary to their laws, as Romans." And they so far incensed both the people and the magistrates, that Paul, and Silas one of his fellow-labourers, "were beaten, and thrust into prison." But there being in the night an earthquake, which was plainly miraculous: the prison being shaken, the doors opened, and the fetters of all the prisoners loosed, whilst yet no one escaped: the keeper of the prison, who before had heard somewhat of Paul and Silas, and had some general notion of their doctrine, now terrified, and perceiving this extraordinary event to be a divine interposition in their favour, put to his prisoners, with solicitude, and with respect and esteem, hoping for a full and satisfactory answer, that momentous question: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

We need not, I think, hesitate to understand this question in the most comprehensive sense. This person could not be ignorant of the general principles of religion, so far as usually known by heathen people, living in the politer cities of Greece, and the Roman empire, who all had some notions of a future state. Moreover, Paul and his fellow-labourers had been some time at Philippi. And the young woman before-mentioned, had followed them in the streets of the city, many, that is, several days, crying aloud: "These men are servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." When therefore the keeper of the prison says: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" the question cannot be reckoned less important for the meaning, than that put to our Saviour by the young man among the Jews, related in the gospels: "What shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" Matt. xix. 16; and Mark x. 17. And it is put, as it seems, with a better temper than that was.

The answer to that inquiry is in the text. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved:" that is, 'Believe in Jesus Christ as a divine teacher, and receive the doctrine 'taught by him, and you will know how you may be saved. Observe and follow the precepts 'and rules of that doctrine, and you will obtain salvation.'

The former may be thought the primary and most obvious meaning of the words: but the latter is also implied. The question is: "What must I do to be saved?" The answer is: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ: and thou shalt be saved." That is, you will know what you ought to do in order to obtain salvation; you will have all the means of salvation, every thing requisite for your direction and assistance. Consequently, if you observe and follow the rules contained in the religion of Jesus Christ, you will be saved.

There are therefore three things to be spoken to. First, the direction here given: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Secondly, the benefit proposed and annexed thereto: "And thou

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shalt be saved." Thirdly, the connection between faith in Jesus Christ and salvation, with the evidence of it.

I. In the first place I should shew, what is meant by "believing on the Lord Jesus Christ."

One thing plainly implied is, believing him to be a divine teacher sent from God: and that he is the Christ, or the Messiah, the great person spoken of by the prophets, and whom God had promised to send. This we may learn by comparing some texts in the gospels.

In the sixteenth of St. Matthew is an account, how our Lord asked the disciples concerning the opinions which men had of him, and then their own. And when Peter answered, for himself, and the rest: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;" he commended him, and declared him blessed.

Again, John vi. 68, 69. "Peter answered, and said: Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

John xi. 37. Martha says: "Yea, Lord, I believe, that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." And at ver. 41, 42, of the same chapter, our Lord having, at the grave of Lazarus, addressed a particular thanksgiving to the Father, adds: "And I know, that thou hearest me always: but because of the people that stand by, I said it: that they might believe, that thou didst send me."

John xvi. 30, the disciples say: "By this we believe, that thou camest forth from God." And in the following chapter, our Lord, in his prayer and thanksgiving to the Father, says: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." And of the disciples he says: ver. 8, "They have surely known, that I came out from thee: and have believed, that thou didst send me."

John vi. 28, 29. "Then said they unto him: what shall we do, that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered, and said unto them: This is the work of God, that ye believe on *him* whom he hath sent."

And it is often taken notice in the gospels, that many believed on Jesus, but the Pharisees believed not: that is, they did not receive him as a prophet, or the great prophet that was to come into the world.

2. Another thing, included in faith in Christ, is believing his words, receiving the doctrine taught by him, or believing the Christian religion.

This is so closely connected with the foregoing particular, that they seem to be both one and the same: and certainly are inseparable. He who believes, that Jesus is sent of God, and the Christ, must believe that his words are true. However, I presume, it is not amiss to observe this distinctly.

Our Lord, who, as before shewn, often speaks of believing in him, "whom God had sent," does also frequently speak of believing, or receiving his words. For he had a doctrine. He was a prophet, or a teacher sent from God. And receiving his doctrine is believing in him. What it was, we perceive from the history of his life, written by the evangelists. In general, it was, Repent. Or, Repent, and believe the gospel. And to such as received, and obeyed that doctrine, he promised everlasting life.

John vii. 16, 17. "Jesus answered them, and said: My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." John xiv. 24. "The word, which you hear, is not mine: but the Father's which sent me." Many of the Jews could not receive his words, because of their prevailing prejudices, and carnal affections. Of the disciples he says: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me: and they have received them, and have believed that thou didst send me," John xvii. 8. Again he says: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," chap. vi. 63. And because he had the "words of eternal life," ver. 68, the disciples believed in him, and determined to abide with him. And knowing the truth and importance of the doctrine taught by him, he declares: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, [now,] of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels," Mark viii. 30.

Believing in Christ is often expressed by coming to him. John v. 40. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." And Matt. xi. 28, 29. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden——take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest for your

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souls." The meaning of which can be no other, than that men should become his disciples submit themselves to his instructions, and embrace the doctrine taught by him with divine authority.

They who believed in Jesus, as sent from God, and received his doctrine as a rule of life, became his disciples: a word that includes all his followers in general, and is equivalent to believers: though the twelve, whom he also named apostles, are sometimes called his disciples, by way of eminence and distinction. But in the general, all who owned him for their master in things of religion, are his disciples. As the disciples of Moses, or Plato, or Aristotle, are such as take them for their masters, and receive their scheme of religion, or philosophy, as true: so it is here, as we perceive from the style of the Gospels, in many places. "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom he named apostles," Luke vi. 13. Joseph of Arimathea, is called a "disciple of Jesus:" Matt. xxvii. 57; John xix. 38; that is, he was one who believed in him as a great prophet, even the Messiah, and received his doctrine as true, and from heaven. In the debate between the Jewish rulers, and the man born blind, whom our Lord had miraculously healed, after many inquiries and answers, they said to him again: "What did he unto thee? how opened he thy eyes? He answered them: I have told you, and ye did not hear. Wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be his disciples? Then they reviled him, and said: Thou art his disciple. But we are Moses's disciples," John ix. 26—28. And long before this: "The disciples of John, and of the Pharisees, fast: but thy disciples fast not," Mark ii. 18.

That word is often used in the Acts as equivalent to believer. "In those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them," ch. vi. 1, 2. "And the word of the Lord increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly," ver. 7. "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha," ch. ix. 36. Ananias, at Damascus, by whom Paul was baptized, is said to be "a disciple," ch. ix. 10. Mnason is called "an old disciple," ch. xxi. 16. I allege but one place more. "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples," or believers, "were first called Christians at Antioch," ch. xi. 26.

This then is faith in Jesus Christ. To believe in him is to receive him as a divine teacher, and his doctrine as true: or to embrace the religion of Christ, and become his disciples and followers.

But then two things are here supposed: First, that men be instructed in the things concerning the Lord Jesus, or be taught his doctrine. And secondly, that they attend to it, and understand it. As St Paul says: "How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" Rom. x. 14. So here. They said: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ: and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." And doubtless he attended diligently. It is true of him, which is said of Lydia. "She heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul," Acts xvi. 14.

For this reason, that men might know the will of God, our Lord went over the "cities" and "villages" of the land of Israel, Matt. ix. 35; Mark vi. 6. 56; Luke xiii. 22; preaching the doctrine of the kingdom, laying hold of every opportunity, and affecting occurrence, to excite attention: calling to men, to hearken and understand, speaking in a familiar manner, sometimes using well contrived parables and similitudes, teaching the word to all sorts of men, as they were able to bear it, in their synagogues, at the temple, at the houses of Pharisees, when they made entertainments, and much company was present.

For this end he sent forth the twelve, and the seventy, to go over the land of Israel, and prepare men for him: and afterwards he enlarged the commission of the twelve, "to go and teach all nations."

II. In the next place we are to consider the benefit proposed to them who believe in Jesus: "And thou shalt be saved:" or, you shall know, what you ought to do in order to be saved: and if you observe it, you will obtain salvation.

This is evidently the design of the words, as they stand here in connection. And it is confirmed by other texts. Cornelius, at Cesarea, was directed by an angel, "who should tell him

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words, whereby he and all his house should be saved," Acts xi. 14. Our Lord tells the Jews: "These things I say, that ye might be saved," John v. 34. Zachariah prophesying over John the Baptist says: "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation, by the remission of their sins," Luke i. 77. And the evangelist Mark assures us, that after his resurrection our Lord said to the Apostles: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved. And he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 15, 16.

III. We should now observe the truth and certainty of this: that he who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, shall have knowledge of the way of salvation: or know what he ought to do in order to be saved. And if he attend to the instructions contained in the doctrine of Christ, he shall be saved.

1. This is evident from the doctrine itself: for it teaches men how they may approve themselves to God, the creator and governor of the world: on whom we depend for all our happiness both here and hereafter.

Men are here taught to repent, and then to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, or to walk becoming the character of Christ's disciples. Upon these conditions they are assured of forgiveness of past sins, and the favour of God.

Men are instructed to love God with all the heart, and their neighbours as themselves: and to do to others as they would that others should do to them. They are required to be holy in all manner of conversation: to abstain not from some sins only, but from all: to perform all the duties of their station and condition. And they are instructed to be careful about the frame of their minds, and to govern their thoughts and affections.

Are not these, and other things contained in the gospel of Christ, excellent rules? Is not this true religion? Does it not appear very likely and reasonable, at first sight, and after mature consideration, that this should be the right way of men's approving themselves to God? and that such should be prepared for a future happiness? They who have this perfection of sincerity, though not the perfection of innocence, cannot be finally rejected of God; but will certainly be accepted and rewarded by him.

2. We know, that this is the way of salvation from many express assurances of Christ and his apostles.

John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting life." Ver. 24. "He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation," ch. viii. 12. "Then spake Jesus unto them again: I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness: but shall have the light of life." And says John the apostle and evangelist, near the conclusion of his gospel: "These things are written, that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name," John xx. 21.

Therefore the will of God, taught by Christ and his apostles, is called the "word of life," Philip. ii. 16. And "the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation," Eph. i. 13. Soon after the ascension of Jesus, the apostles were imprisoned by the Jewish rulers: but were delivered by an angel, who said, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life," Acts v. 20. And they who rejected this doctrine are said to "judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life," ch. xiii. 46.

3. We are farther assured of the truth of what our Lord and his apostles taught from the confirmation given to their doctrine by the miracles wrought by them: works of divine power, and manifest tokens of the divine presence with them, and concurrence with them in their design.

No men could do such things "if God was not with them," John iii. 2. Our Lord was a prophet, "mighty in word and deed, before God and all the people," Luke xxiv. 19. Or, as St. Peter says, at the house of Cornelius, a gentile, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power: who went about, healing all that were oppressed of the devil. For God was with him," Acts x. 38. He had "the Spirit without measure," John iii. 34. And from him also the apostles received grace to accomplish the ministry assigned to them. They were enlightened themselves, and they taught the truth to others with perspicuity. "The Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word with signs following," Mark xvi. 20.

Beside their miraculous works of divine power, we might observe their divine temper: the

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spotless innocence of Jesus, and the shining virtue of his apostles: their meekness, patience, indefatigable and disinterested zeal. Whence we may be assured, they thought as they said: and were firmly persuaded, that the word they taught was from heaven, and that whosoever received it and obeyed it would be saved.

4. They who receive this doctrine are in the way of salvation: for it contains motives and considerations of great moment, to induce men to follow and obey its precepts.

Here life and immortality are set in a clear and engaging light. We are mightily animated and encouraged by the perfect example, the willing death, and the triumphant resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. And in the glory set before us, by him and his gospel, there is what may overbalance all the influence of present and sensible things, and assist us in overcoming this world, and all its temptations.

5. To which I may add one consideration more, as an evidence of this truth: this doctrine contains some instructions which must be of singular use to us in our present circumstances.

Here are not only the necessary, reasonable precepts of true holiness: but also some excellent directions, very expedient for us in our state of frailty: whilst we are imperfect, and are surrounded with snares. "Watch and prav, that ye enter not into temptation, and be not overcome of evil. Let your loins be girded, and your lights burning: and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord. Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace."

These considerations amount to a full proof of this truth: and shew, that they who attend to this doctrine canot fail of salvation. The rule is right and infallible, if observed. And it is of such a nature, that they who know it, and think of it, must be forcibly engaged to act according to it. As St. Paul says: "The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth," Rom. i. 16.

SERMON XII.

THE GOSPEL THE TRUE WAY OF SALVATION.

And they said: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ: and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Acts xvi. 31.

In discoursing on these words; I have already shewn what is to be understood, both here and elsewhere; by believing in Jesus Christ: or the nature of faith in him. Next, the benefit here proposed and promised, which is salvation. And thirdly, the connection between faith in Jesus Christ, and salvation, with the evidence of it.

IV. I now intend to mention some inferences by way of application.

1. We perceive from the history before us, that affecting awakening occurrences in life are sometimes of great use to men.

The keeper of the prison at Philippi by the shaking of the prison, and the loosening of the bands of all under his charge, was brought into great distress of mind: supposing that the prisoners had escaped, and fearing the displeasure of his superiors. But that distress was useful. He was brought to serious thoughts of religion, and a concern for eternal salvation, and how to obtain it.

The Lord was pleased to render the conversion of Saul very affecting, who was to be an instrument in converting many others, and who was likely to meet with many difficulties in the discharge of the office for which he was designed. As he was journeying to Damascus, Acts ix. in the company of others, with a design to apprehend all whom he should find there, that called upon the name of Jesus: "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven, insomuch that he fell to the earth: and then heard a voice saying unto him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said: Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said: I am Jesus whom thou per-

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secutest.—And he trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Much after the same manner with the gaoler at Philippi: "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved? And the Lord said unto him: Arise, go into the city; and it shall be told thee what thou must do—" And "Saul arose from the earth—And they led him by the hand, and brought him to Damascus. And he was three days without sight: and neither did eat nor drink."

Possibly some appearances less awful, some means less awakening than these, might have been sufficient to work upon Saul, and convince him of his sin. Somewhat less than all this might have sufficed to induce him to become of a persecutor a preacher of the Gospel: nevertheless we may reasonably think, that every part of that remarkable transaction was wisely ordered. It was suited to make deep impressions on Saul, and would be of lasting use to secure his future steadiness, faithfulness, and zeal.

In a like manner, still, remarkable occurrences in life, whether signal deliverances or afflictive events, though not miraculous, may be overruled by Divine Providence for reclaiming men from a sinful course of life, or for alarming good men fallen into negligence and security.

2. We may collect from this history, that the Christian religion does not condemn or forbid the exercise of any employments and offices that are necessary and useful in this world.

This person, after his conversion to Christianity, seems still to have continued in the office of keeper of the prison at Philippi. He believed and had been baptized. And after this, "when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let these men go. And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul: The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace." The order of the magistrates was sent to him; and he delivered it to Paul and Silas. He was therefore still in his former office. Nor does it appear that St. Paul had enjoined him to quit it.

Whilst therefore no sinful compliances are insisted upon as qualifications, any useful and necessary office may be discharged by a Christian.

3. We cannot but observe here a just character of the Christian religion. It is the doctrine of salvation: it teaches men what they ought to do to be saved.

We have formerly shewed the connection between faith in Jesus Christ and salvation; nevertheless it is fit to make this remark here. Jesus is eminently the Saviour. He "saves his people from their sins," Matt. i. 21. He "delivers from the wrath to come," 1 Thess. i. 10; and will bestow eternal life upon them that obey him. Says the angel to the shepherds near Bethlehem: "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," Luke ii. 10, 11; and his gospel is called "the saving grace of God," Tit. ii. 11.

Such then is the word taught by Christ. It is the doctrine of salvation. It is not a scheme of natural philosophy, teaching the several orders and powers of invisible beings; or the hidden nature and various properties of material things. It is not a system of civil policy and government. It is not the art of fine speaking and rhetorical discourse. But it teaches men of every rank and condition the duties of their condition, and the several branches of piety: what they ought to do to be saved: how they ought to walk that they may please God. It affords directions and assistances for persevering in virtue: for resisting and overcoming temptations, so as that they may maintain their integrity to the end, and have peace in death, and inherit everlasting life.

4. The Christian doctrine is fitted to awaken, convince, and reform men of every temper, and every station in life.

We have a proof of it in the conversion of this person, who had been employed in an office which is apt to render men rough and untractable; which is, perhaps, more especially fit for such tempers; and is also likely to cherish self-confidence, fierceness, and austerity of behaviour.

Such an one is the convert in the text. We see what he once was; how he was affected, and how he was changed and reformed. Paul and Silas, having been accused before the rulers of Philippi, were beaten by their order; after which the same rulers cast them into prison, "charging the gaoler to keep them safely. Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in stocks." He readily executed a severe sentence; and possibly, added to the rigour of it. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every man's

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hands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword, and would have killed himself." Here we see the rashness and resolution of a man of strong passions. "But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Now he is affected to a great degree, and in good measure humbled and softened. Sensible of his ignorance and guilt, he inquires how he may be saved: and he is open to conviction. When the truth is proposed to him, he embraceth it, and practises compassion and tenderness, to which he had hitherto been a stranger. "And they said unto him: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway." How obedient is he to the heavenly, saving doctrine of the gospel! "And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." How great is this change!

Indeed, the doctrine of the gospel, setting before men the evil of sin, the necessity of holiness, the future misery of the wicked, the glory of heaven for the righteous, and the grace of God to all that repent: and speaking of these things clearly and strongly, in a manner unknown to reason, and the law of Moses, is adapted to make impressions upon all who are capable of thought and consideration.

And thus, as "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15; and "to call men to repentance," Matt. ix. 13; he does by his doctrine effectually bring them to repentance, and saves them from their sins.

5. The Christian religion, and they who are animated by its principles, are concerned for the welfare of men of every age and every condition.

This person said to Paul and Silas: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house:" some, very probably, in early age, some of very mean condition, hired servants and bondsmen, slaves for a time, or for life: but all rational, accountable beings, capable of salvation, and formed for everlasting life, if they do not render themselves unworthy of it. And Cornelius, of Cesarea, was directed by an angel to send for Peter: who would tell him words whereby he and all his might be saved.

6. We learn from this history, as well as from divers other things in the book of the Acts, and from other parts of the New Testament, that the Christian doctrine, or the great things of religion, may be taught and understood in a short space of time.

It could be only some general knowledge of the doctrine of Paul, which this person had before. But now upon some short discourses and arguments of the apostle, he becomes a believer, and is baptized. So likewise Lydia "attended to the things that were spoken of Paul:" and she and her household were baptized forthwith. And upon Peter's first sermon at Jerusalem, after our Lord's "ascension, they that gladly received his word, were baptized. And the same day were added to them about three thousand men," Acts ii. 41. Afterwards, "Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake; hearing and seeing the miracles which he did——And there was great joy in that city——And when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women," ch. viii. 5—12. Not long after this, Philip by divine direction, meets the chamberlain and treasurer of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, a proselyte of the Jewish religion, who had been up at Jerusalem to worship: and Philip preached Jesus unto him. After a short conversation, travelling in the chariot, he is convinced, and proposes to be baptized. Philip said: "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. He answered, and said: I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then Philip baptized him," ver. 26—38.

It seems therefore, that the Christian religion may be so set before men, as that they shall in a short time attain to a competent knowledge of it, and believe upon good grounds. And it must be agreeable to think, that the knowledge of the doctrine of salvation, in which all men are concerned, is not a very abstruse and difficult science, but easy, and upon the level with ordinary capacities.

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Indeed, where there are strong prejudices and worldly passions prevailing greatly, as in most of the Jews in our Saviour's time, the best instructions will have little effect. But when men are well disposed, the Christian religion and its evidences may be soon perceived and understood, if rightly proposed. This is manifest from the instances in the Acts, just mentioned; and from many sincere conversions, and numerous churches formed by the apostles in divers places in a short space of time.

However, in such a world as ours, where there are temptations of no small force, and numerous amusements and avocations, it is requisite that we carefully attend to "the things which we have heard," Heb. ii. 1, and often meditate upon them. Nor should we forsake the assemblies of Christians, but stir up one another to love and good works, ch. x. 24, 25.

Moreover some will teach things which they ought not, for the sake of private interest: and there is danger, if we are not upon our guard, lest some articles should be mixed with the pure and uncorrupted doctrine of the gospel, that tend to enervate its purifying and sanctifying influences.

And we should go on to perfection, and improve in religious knowledge and useful gifts, that we may be able to instruct and admonish others.

St. Paul, as we all know, cultivated the good principles which he had planted in the minds of men. He was greatly solicitous for their welfare, and apprehensive lest by some means they should be seduced and perverted from the simplicity that is in Christ. He therefore sent to them some of his fellow-labourers, in whom he could confide, to strengthen and comfort them: or by personal visits, or by epistles, reminded them of the truths he had taught: exhorting them to be "steadfast in the faith," and to adorn it by a holy conversation: "Beseeching and exhorting them by the Lord Jesus, that as they had received of him, how they ought to walk and to please God, so they would abound more and more," 1 Thess. iv. 1.

7. We are hence enabled to form a just estimate of the conduct of those who receive, and of those who reject the gospel.

For the doctrine of the gospel is a kind proposal and gracious message from God to mankind, by Jesus Christ and his apostles, and others after them, instructing men in the way of salvation, teaching them how they may obtain eternal life, and surmount and overcome every obstacle in the way to it.

They therefore who receive and obey it act wisely. They consult their present peace, and secure to themselves the happiness of a better life.

What then do they who reject it? As St. Luke says of some: "they reject the counsel of God against" or toward "themselves," Luke vii. 30. It becomes us to be cautious how we censure particular persons: remembering St. Paul's advice: "Judge nothing before the time," 1 Cor. iv. 5. God only knows the hearts of men, and all their peculiar circumstances. But where the gospel is proposed in truth and simplicity, men had need to take heed how they reject it: and should at least afford it a serious attention and impartial examination.

8. It follows from what has been said, that we, to whom the doctrine of the gospel has been preached, and who have received it as the word of God, know the way of salvation, and may obtain eternal life if we use due care and diligence.

And, certainly, we ought so to do; and not neglect any of the rules and precepts that have been delivered to us. The profession of Christianity will not save us. Christians, so called, if they are wicked, are not in the way of salvation: for they do not the things which their religion teaches they ought to do in order to be saved. They are condemned, and excluded from happiness by the very rules and laws of that religion which they profess to receive as divine. Such therefore are still "in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity. They have no part or lot in this matter. Their heart is not right in the sight of God," Acts ix. 20—23. And they cannot but know, that they should immediately repent and seek forgiveness of God, or they perish for ever; and their ruin will be great and terrible.

9. We have here a good argument to be stedfast in the truth as it is in Jesus, and to let his word abide in us.

For it is the word of life. It is the doctrine of salvation. Does it want any thing to complete that character? Is there any other word equal to it? Is it not strict to a great degree? Are not its rules and precepts reasonable and excellent? And does it not afford the best arguments that can be devised, to promote and secure that universal holiness which it requires?

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Indeed, it is supposed in the epistle to the Hebrews, that "some may fall away, who were once enlightened, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come," Heb. vi. And St. Peter makes the supposition, "that some, who have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, may be again entangled therein, and overcome," 2 Pet. ii. 20. And St. Paul with grief speaks of "many, who so walked," as to shew themselves "enemies of the cross of Christ," Philip. iii. 18.

But these instances do not invalidate the truth of God, nor the power of the gospel of Christ: which does very forcibly "teach us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world," Tit. ii. 12. St. Paul therefore was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: knowing it to be "the power of God to salvation, both to Jews and Gentiles." And he therefore glories in it, because "thereby the world had been crucified to him, and he to the world." St. James makes no hesitation to exhort men to "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls," Jam. i. 21.

Let us then esteem the doctrine of the gospel as a very precious advantage, teaching us how to act, so as to approve ourselves to God: how to perform the duties of our stations: how to improve the mercies and afflictions of this state, so as that we may lay up a good foundation against the time to come, and obtain everlasting life.

Happy discoveries are pleasing and entertaining to men, whilst new and fresh: but they are really a good foundation of lasting joy. We have reason always to rejoice, and think ourselves happy, that we have the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation through him. It was the abiding frame of the apostle Paul. And after that the gospel had cost him much of those things which are highly esteemed by the most, he declares, that he "counted all things" base and contemptible, "for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord," Philip. iii. 8.

10. Finally, this subject puts us in mind of the importance of our preaching and hearing.

Says St. Paul to Timothy: "Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine. Continue in them. For so doing, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee," 1 Tim. iv. 16. This is the design of our preaching: to teach men the way of salvation, and to persuade them to walk and persevere therein: Such therefore must be the usual topics of our discourse, as explain the certain principles, and enforce the great duties of religion. And such things ought to be carefully attended to.

And when men receive the truth in the love of it, and come under the power of it: when their affections are set upon things above: and they can be contented in every condition: when men live in love and friendship: and their moderation is conspicuous: and they are ready to offices of goodness of various kinds, to all men: this is the best recompense, the most desirable fruit of well meant endeavours, to instruct men in things of religion: greater than applauses for elegance of speech, and exactness of method, or any thing else that can be named. Such hearers are an honour to their instructors. And if they who speak, and they who hear, are saved in the day of the Lord, they will be mutually a crown of glory and rejoicing, when the most splendid, and the most durable things of this earth are no more.

SERMON XIII.

THE GOOD EXERCISE OF FAITH.

Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life: whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. 1 Tim. vi. 12.

THERE are some texts of scripture, that at first appear plain, and easy to be understood: which yet are somewhat difficult and obscure, and the precise meaning is not readily apprehended. And sometimes we are liable to be diverted from the right meaning by a translation. Which is not always owing to the mistake of the translators of the bible: but rather to some defect in modern languages, which want words corresponding to the ancient original.

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Of this we seem to have an instance in the present text. "Fight the good fight of faith." Many may be apt to think, that the apostle's metaphorical expressions are taken from wars and battles: and that he here recommends to Timothy, to behave as a valiant soldier in the service of the gospel. And they may be the more induced to this apprehension by some other exhortations to Timothy, where the allusion is manifest. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy,——that thou mightest war a good warfare," 1 Tim. i. 18. And, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," 2 Tim. ii. 34. Moreover St. Paul has made use of the same allusion in an exhortation to Christians in general: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God——Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness: and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one: and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God," Eph. vi. 13—17.

Nevertheless it appears from the original words,[a] that the apostle alludes not here to the life of a soldier engaged in wars; but rather to the games, at that time very famous among the Greeks, and in some parts of Asia, which had learned the Greek customs: and, indeed, almost all over the Roman empire. In which games there were contentions in the way of racing, on foot and in chariots, and in the way of combat. And the present text is rather to be explained by that in the ninth chapter of the first to the Corinthians, than by that before cited from the epistle to the Ephesians. The passage is to this purpose: "Know ye not, that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it, to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I, not as one that beateth the air," 1 Cor. ix. 24—26; where the apostle alludes to two of the exercises of those games, running and boxing.

Such is the figurative expression in the text: and perhaps the allusion might be made more manifest, and the ambiguity in some measure avoided, if the original were rendered, "Exercise the good exercise of faith." The word here rendered fight, is the same with that which is rendered "striving for the mastery" in the passage just quoted from the first to the Corinthians. Every[b] "one that striveth for the mastery," or every one that striveth in the games, "is temperate in all things." And we have the same expression again in another place, where St. Paul says, "I[c] have fought a good fight," 2 Tim. iv. 7; or, I have exercised a good exercise. He had himself done what he here exhorts Timothy to do.

It is not unusual with the apostle to compare, and very elegantly, the Christian course, that is, the life of private Christians, or of those who are in some office in the church, to a warfare, and to a contention in the public and celebrated games, then in use among the people most renowned for politeness: in which games some of the most distinguished citizens of those places entered themselves. And these two allusions are joined together by him in a text, in part quoted already: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that wars, entangles himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please him, who has chosen him to be a soldier. And[d] if a man strive for the mastery, he is not crowned, unless he strive lawfully," 2 Tim. ii. 3—5.

The general design of the exhortation is: 'Exercise the good exercise of faith, so as to obtain the prize of eternal life, to which thou art called in the gospel: and for obtaining which, thou hast engaged to exert thyself, by that good profession, which thou hast already made in the presence of many witnesses, or spectators.'

In farther discoursing on these words I shall observe this method.

I. I shall shew what is meant by "exercising the exercise of faith."

II. Why it is called a good fight or exercise.

III. And then conclude with a practical application.

I. I would consider what is meant by "exercising the exercise of faith."

Some have hereby understood contending for the truth of the gospel, maintaining, and propagating it in the world. But that, I think, is but one part of the exercise, or contention here

[a] Αγωνιζε τον καλον αγωνα της πιστεως.
[b] Πας δε ο αγωνιζομενος.
[c] Τον αγωνα τον καλον ηγωνισμαι.
[d] Εαν δε και αθλη τις, ου στεφανεται, εαν μη νομιμως αθλησῃ.

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spoken of. For Timothy appears to me to be here as much, or rather more exhorted as a Christian, than as an Evangelist.

By the fight of faith I suppose to be intended the fight of the gospel; or that fight and exercise which the gospel requires; or which Jesus Christ teaches and recommends in the gospel.

And by the fight, or exercise of faith, I would understand the practice of all virtue, a course of holy obedience to the dictates of reason, and the commands of God. The connection assures us of this. St. Paul had argued against the selfish designs of some, and shewn the evil of covetousness. Whereupon he adds: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things: and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness," 1 Tim. vi. 11. "Fight the good fight of faith." Or, exercise the good exercise of the gospel. Which is also agreeable to another exhortation in the second epistle to this same person, 2 Tim. ii. 21, 22.

This exhortation is fitly addressed to private Christians, as well as to a minister of the gospel: whilst at the same time different stations and circumstances will infer, in some respects, different duties and obligations.

'The fight of faith, as [a] one expresseth it, includes an open profession, and strenuous defending the doctrine of faith, and making it good by a life suitable to the rule of faith.'

This open profession, and zealous defence of truth, accompanied with a suitable practice of virtue, may be fitly compared to the exercises in the Olympic games, because of the difficulty of the performance. There is a necessity that we be temperate in all things, watchful and circumspect. And we may meet with opposition and discouragement. And as in those exercises there was a crown or garland proposed to those who excelled, so a life of holiness here will be rewarded with glory and happiness hereafter.

These resemblances are the foundation of this comparison, and of those allusive exhortations which we meet with in the New Testament. The word exercise, fight or strife, seems particularly to have a reference to the opposition we may meet with in the practice of virtue. In the games alluded to there was always a contention. So are we likely to meet with things that will try our strength, and oblige us to exert ourselves to the utmost. Not only in times of persecution, but in all seasons there are difficulties attending a sincere profession of religious truth, and a steady practice of virtue. Hopes of preferment in times of ease and prosperity may be as dangerous and ensnaring as fears of death, or of the loss of goods, in a time of persecution. Yea both these temptations usually meet. The strictly conscientious must in most times forego some advantages, which might be obtained, and incur some inconveniences, which might be avoided by compliances, not reconcilable with religion and virtue.

St. Paul therefore here requires, and earnestly exhorts Timothy, to "exercise the good exercise of faith:" that is, to be steady and resolute, and hold out in the open profession and zealous defence of the plain truth of the gospel, and the practice of all the duties of righteousness, meekness, and charity: and to shun every thing contrary to them: so acting according to the directions of the gospel, or the doctrine of faith, without being moved by hopes of worldly ease, wealth, honour and authority: and likewise without being terrified by threats of adversaries, and fears of any temporal evils, which he might be in danger of; as that he might not fail of obtaining that eternal life which is proposed as the reward of constancy and perseverance.

This exhortation is much the same with that at the beginning of the twelfth chapter to the Hebrews. With which therefore I conclude this head. "Wherefore, seeing we are encompassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that does so easily beset us. And let us run with patience the race set before us: looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame: and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

II. In the next place we are to consider, why this is called a good exercise. The apostle had some reasons for adding that character. Very probably the word is expressive and emphatical. We should therefore try to discover the design of it.

8. It is good, as it is innocent.

This could scarce be said of the exercises in the games of Greece. For, notwithstanding the many allusions to them in the books of the New Testament, it is not the design of the sacred writers to recommend or justify those diversions. They only intend to recommend to Christians

[a] Pool's Annotations.

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that zeal, diligence, activity and perseverance, in the cause of truth and virtue, which they shewed who had a part in those exercises. But those persons might not be altogether innocent in the principle they acted upon, nor in all their actions. Their principle might be ambition or vain glory. And in some of their combats the action might be detrimental to the antagonist.

But the exercise of faith is perfectly innocent. It proceeds from no bad principle. It is injurious to none. The principles it maintains and contends for, are certain truths, built upon sure evidence. And they have no bad tendencies. The principles of the gospel inspire not men with any hurtful designs. The actions, which they recommend, are all reasonable and beneficial. Nor are they who exercise in this exercise moved by envy, and ill-will to any: nor yet by an exorbitant love of gain: nor by pride, or ambition of worldly honour.

2. It is good, inasmuch as it is worthy and important, not mean and trifling.

The celebrated contentions to which the apostle alludes, though in so much repute, were trifling, in comparison of this exercise of faith. They consisted chiefly in the show of bodily strength, and some skill in matters of small moment. But they who exercise the exercise of faith are employed in matters of great value. The principles which they maintain, and resolutely refuse to deny, are truths of great importance. And they are engaged in designs and actions of much moment; governing the affections, with regard to all the sensible things of this life, and ordering the whole of the conversation, according to the rules of right reason. This is much more considerable than all the exploits of the Grecian combatants.

3. Consequently, the exercise of faith is a good exercise, as it is very honourable.

Though Christians were then had in contempt, and their faith was ridiculed, the apostle calls the "exercise of faith," that is, steadiness in the profession of truth, and the practice of virtue, a good exercise. It is a thing of more true honour than the combats so much applauded at that time in many parts of the world. It is a thing of vast difficulty. And it depends upon a very noble resolution and firmness of mind. The greatest offers which the world can make, and the worst evils which it can inflict, are oftentimes set before men, to induce them to desert the interest of known truth, and transgress the rules of virtue: and their compliance is solicited with long and tiresome importunity, and all the arts, most suited to gain the consent against the convictions of conscience: or to silence its dictates and remonstrances. To be fixed and immovable in the way of virtue upon such occasions is very honourable. Yea not only for men thus to exert themselves on some special and extraordinary occasions, as the Olympic combatants did in the time of their solemnity, and the preparatory exercises, possibly, of some few months or years continuance: but to maintain and carry on this exercise of faith, a steady regard to the principles and rules of the gospel throughout the whole life, in the various and trying occurrences of it, amidst allurements and discouragements. This is truly honourable and commendable.

4. The exercise of faith is a good exercise, with regard to its event, as it has a good reward annexed to it.

That reward is now distant, and out of sight. It is not bestowed here. But it is very sure; and it is great and transcendent. In allusion to the custom of the Grecian games, the apostle sometimes calls the reward of virtue a crown: but he gives it the preference greatly above the crowns, or garlands of the Olympic victors. And we ought to do the same: though we should take in other advantages annexed to it; some distinguished honours and privileges in the cities where they dwelt. "Now they do it," says he, "to obtain a corruptible crown: we, an incorruptible," 1 Cor. ix. 25. And St. Peter assures the elders, who behave well, that, "when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. v. 4.

That is justly styled a good exercise, which has a good reward annexed to it.

5. It is a good exercise as all who perform it are entitled to the reward of eternal life.

This is a singular advantage, peculiar to the exercise which has been instituted by the Lord of all: men, however willing and large-hearted, being obliged to limit the recompenses, which they propose to such as they would encourage, according to the proportion of their small abilities. This circumstance is particularly taken notice of in a text before cited. "Know ye not, that they which run in a race, run all: but one receiveth the prize. So run, that ye may obtain;" that is, that ye may all obtain, 1 Cor. ix. 24.

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In those Olympic exercises, whether of race or combat, one only in each received a prize, even the victor. But in the Christian race and combat every one is victor who performs well. Every one that denies himself, and, notwithstanding the temptations of this world, is steady in the profession of truth, and the practice of virtue is a conqueror, and shall receive a crown of righteousness from the righteous judge.

6. Once more, the exercise of faith is a good exercise, on account of the supports and encouragements afforded to those who undertake it.

They are encouraged by the greatness of the reward proposed to them by him who is able to do more than we think or conceive. They are also animated by the example of many who have overcome in this combat: and especially by the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has been tried, as we now are: and who has power to grant to "them who overcome, to sit with him in his throne, even as he also overcame, and is set down with his Father, in his throne," Rev. iii. 21.

Moreover, all success in this exercise, every act of self-denial, every instance of steadiness amidst temptations, and in opposition to the adversaries of our virtue, when reflected on, casts light and joy on the mind, cheers and refreshes, and inspires with renewed ardour, and strengthens for farther difficulties. As the apostle says: "For which cause we faint not: but though the outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day:——whilst we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things seen are temporal: but the things not seen are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 16, 18.

III. It remains only, that I conclude, as at first proposed, with some inferences, by the way of a practical application. They will be these two.

1. We are here reminded, that a life of religion and virtue has, in this world, its difficulties.

It is no very easy thing to be steady in the profession of truth, and the practice of virtue. They who expect to find every thing smooth and easy in this way, and look for no opposition or discouragement, will be disappointed. For the life of a Christian, as we have seen, is compared in scripture to a warfare, a race, a combat. It is a contention, an exercise that requires a good deal of resolution, and will try all our strength and skill.

2. Nevertheless there is encouragement to hold on therein.

For it is a good exercise. It is innocent and honourable, and will have a great reward hereafter, and has at present its joys and supports; which are not small, but very exhilarating and strengthening.

It is not a little pleasing to hear it called a good exercise by those who have made trial of it. St. Paul, who was so great a master therein, who knew all its difficulties, who had met with good report and ill report, who had been in perils of every kind, who had been as laborious and diligent as any in the service of the gospel: in a word, he who knew by experience, how much it might cost men, calls it a good exercise. He recommends it to others as such. And near the period of his life he says with exultation and triumph: "I have exercised a good exercise: I have finished my race: I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. This is very encouraging to all who are well disposed.

And let us consider what the apostle adds in this exhortation to Timothy; that he had made a good profession; which may be also said of most of us. We have been taught, and we have acknowledged the principles of the Christian religion: and we have engaged to fulfil its obligations. Let not expected good fruits be lost for want of perseverance. How great is the reward set before us! How great will be the honour and the joy to receive a crown of righteousness from the righteous Judge! How sad, how afflictive beyond all expression, to lose his reward! It is proposed to us. We may obtain it: but we must now work the works of rigeteousness, and persevere therein. Whenever sloth and indolence, weariness and fainting of mind, are ready to prevail and gain ground on us, let us recollect this, or some other like quickening admonition of holy scripture: "Exercise the good exercise of faith. Lay hold on eternal life." And, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not," Gal. vi. 9.

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SERMON XIV.

THE POWER AND EFFICACY OF CHRIST'S DOCTRINE.

For without me ye can do nothing. John xv. 5.

Our Lord in this context compares himself to a vine, and his followers to branches. Some think that these words were spoken upon occasion of things recorded in the other gospels, after eating the paschal supper, and Christ's instituting a memorial of himself, to be observed among his people: where he speaks of "the fruit of the vine," Matt. xxvi. 29; Mark xiv. 25. Others think that our Lord was now retired with the disciples to the mount of Olives, which is said to have abounded with vines. Whether either of those conjectures be right or not, unquestionably the affecting discourses recorded here, and in the adjoining chapters, are such as our blessed Lord had with his disciples at the paschal supper, and after it, the night in which he was betrayed, and a little before he was taken from them. Those discourses had made deep and lasting impressions upon the minds of the apostles. We may suppose, that St. John had often repeated them in his public preaching, and in conversation, in the history he had given of his Lord and Master by word of mouth. And now that he was induced to publish a written gospel, in which he designed to insert some particulars omitted by the former evangelists, he determined to record those discourses somewhat at length; being persuaded that they would be of signal use to all that would seriously attend to them.

Ver. 1. "I am the true vine:" a right and generous vine. Or, as the phrase is in one of the prophets, "a noble vine," Jer. ii. 21. In this gospel of St. John, our Lord, at several places, styles himself "the true light, the true bread, the good shepherd." He is all these by way of excellence. He is himself faithful: his words are most true and sure: and his doctrine is most excellent and powerful; suited to cherish the spiritual life, and to afford genuine fruits of righteousness and true holiness.

"And my Father is the husbandman:" or the proprietor, who cultivates it in the best manner.

Ver. 2. "Every branch in me, that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth," or pruneth "it, that it may bring forth more fruit." 'All who 'make a profession of faith in me, are disciples by name, and visible members of my church. 'But there are methods of Providence, that will shew who are true and sincere. In time of 'temptation, when any extraordinary offers of worldly good, or dangers of evil, are presented, 'some will fall away, whilst others will be purified and improved by the same events.'

Ver. 3. "Now ye are clean, through the word, which I have spoken unto you." 'As it is 'meet for me to encourage, as well as to warn and admonish you; I readily own, that you have 'received my word, and have shewn a great regard to it. And it has had good effects upon 'you.'

Ver. 4. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me." 'And I recommend it to you, as 'what will answer the best purposes to retain your present esteem and affection for me, and regard 'to my words.'

Ver. 5. "I am the vine: ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. For without me ye can do nothing." 'Let me inculcate this 'upon you under the similitude which I have mentioned. You will find the case to resemble 'that of a vine and its branches. If you are my disciples indeed, and throughout: if you al-'ways maintain your respect for me, and consider my words as true and divine, the rule of your 'conduct, and the ground and measure of your hopes, you will abound in the practice of all 'virtue, and will be steadfast and unmoved. But if you neglect me, and my words, you will 'not any longer bear that good fruit, but will be like a branch, cut off and separated from the 'root.'

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"Without me:" is the same as separated from me. In the margin of some of our bibles the phrase is rendered "severed from me." Which is the meaning of the expression: though the literal rendering may be, "without me," or "out of me."

Ver. 6. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast out as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." 'If you cast off your regard 'for me, and for the truth and simplicity of my doctrine, you will resemble a branch separated 'from the root, which soon withers, and becomes fit for nothing, but to be burned. So you, 'not bringing forth fruits of true holiness, or bearing nothing to perfection, will be worthless 'and contemptible.'

Which is agreeable to what is said in another gospel, under a different similitude. "Ye are the salt of the earth. But if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men," Matt. v. 13.

"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth fruit. For without me ye can do nothing."

The general meaning is: 'Whereas by a close adherence to me, and my words, you may 'excel in virtue, and persevere therein: if you should forsake me, or abate in your respect for 'me and my doctrine, you will do nothing considerable, and may become destitute of all 'true worth.'

I shall now endeavour further to illustrate this text in some propositions: and then add two or three remarks by way of application.

I. The propositions for illustrating the text are these.

Prop. 1. Our Lord does not here intend to say, that without the knowledge of him and his religion, no man can ever do any thing that is good, or right, or virtuous, and acceptable in the sight of God.

Indeed it is hard to think, that rational and intelligent beings should be destitute of all power to do that which is good. It is not reasonable to suppose, that God should form any intelligent beings destitute of such a power: or that he should suffer them to fall into such incapacity, whilst they are in a state of trial, and their everlasting interests are depending. And there are many things in scripture, either said occasionally, or on set purpose, from which we can conclude men to have this power.

Says St. Paul to the Romans: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law; these having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts: their conscience also bearing witness, ——either accusing, or else excusing them," Rom. ii. 14, 15. They discerned some things to be good and right, others wrong and evil. When they did the one, they were well satisfied with themselves: when the other, their conscience accused them of evil. That text seems manifestly to teach, that heathens had knowledge of things praise-worthy, and otherwise; and that they had power to choose the one, and decline the other.

It is true, the apostle says in the same epistle, that "all the world was become guilty before God," ch. iii. 19. The meaning of which appears to be, that there was a great degeneracy in the world, both amongst Jews and Gentiles: that there was great need of the gospel, to reclaim and reform men: and that there are none perfectly righteous, and free from all sin: wherefore all stand in need of the pardoning mercy of God. But he does not say, I apprehend, of every individual among Jews and Gentiles, who had not the knowledge of Christ and his gospel, that there were none sincerely good and virtuous: none, who had that righteousness and integrity, which a good, and holy, and gracious, God will accept and reward.

There are in the gospels instances of persons, not within the pale of the Jewish church, who gave proofs of a good disposition, and were commended, and accepted by the Lord Jesus. In like manner, it is not impossible, but that still some, not acquainted with the Christian religion, may do what is good and virtuous.

A Roman centurion, quartered in one of the cities of Galilee, sent to Jesus, saying, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented," Matt. viii. 6. But when Jesus was coming toward him, recollecting that it had not been usual for Jews to converse with him, and persuaded of the great power of Christ, he sends him a second message, saying, "Lord, I am not worthy, that thou shouldst come under my roof. Speak the word only, and

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my servant shall be healed——When Jesus heard it he marvelled, and said to them that followed, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

The woman of Canaan is another remarkable instance. She cried, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David. He answered, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Matt. xv. 22, 24. But at length her importunity was so great, and the truth of her faith was so manifest, that our Lord said to her: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Cornelius, after our Lord's ascension, is another Gentile, without the limits of the Jewish church, who performed commendably. "There was," says St. Luke, "a certain man in Cæsarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band, called the Italian band: a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house: who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always," Acts x. 1, 2. An angel appeared to him about the ninth hour of the day, or three in the afternoon, when day-light is clear, who said unto him: "Cornelius, thy prayers and thy alms have come up for a memorial before God." This person, though still a Gentile, was approved of God. He was sincere and upright, according to the light which he had: and his prayers and alms were good works, which God accepted. And he is pitched upon to be the first Gentile, who, with his family, should have afforded to them the greater advantages of the knowledge of the gospel, or way of salvation through Jesus Christ, and be received into the Christian church, or among the disciples of Christ, without subjection to the law of Moses: which had been hitherto the way of admission into the Jewish church, the only people who were professed worshippers of God.

We might further argue from things said by our Lord to the Jews. "Jesus answered them: My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself," John vii. 16—18. Where our Lord speaks of men doing the will of God before they believe in him. And his intention is, that upright and honest men, who have an unfeigned regard to the will of God, so far as they are acquainted with it, and have an opportunity of knowing it, according to the dispensation they are under will be disposed to believe in him. They who at that time were free from prejudices would soon discern, that divine attestations were afforded to him: and would own, that the doctrine taught by him was true, and from heaven.

Prop. 2. I would observe, secondly, that our blessed Lord does not intend to say, that no men, not even his disciples, can do any good thing without immediate and effectual impulses and impressions from him: but the ability to do good, which he here speaks of, is to be understood as ascribed to his word and doctrine, or the principles taught by him: without a regard to which, he says, men would do nothing.

God may give special aids to men whenever he thinks fit: but they are not always necessary, nor always to be expected. And that our Lord rather speaks of his word and doctrine, than of himself personally considered, is evident from his manner of speaking in many places.

Our Lord in this context does several times speak of his disciples "abiding in him, and he in them," as necessary to their bearing fruit: but he chiefly intends a strict and steady regard to his word, and the influences of that upon their minds. This appears from many texts. Ver. 3. "Now ye are clean through the word, which I have spoken unto you." Ver. 7. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you." This latter expression explains the former: or it may be taken a little otherwise, as if he had said, 'If you continue to believe in 'me, and to pay a steady regard to my doctrine, you will be highly acceptable to God.'

Again: "I have manifested thy name unto the men, which thou gavest me out of the world:——and they have kept thy word," John xvii. 6. "I have given them thy word. Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth," ver. 14, 17. In the word of God are contained those sanctifying, strengthening influences which are needful for us, and are so powerful and effectual.

To which we might add other texts from the same gospel.

"Verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death to life," John v. 24. "Then said Jesus unto those Jews which believed on him: If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples," ch. viii. 31. In this chapter, where is the text, he speaks of

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"abiding in him." There it is, "if ye continue," or abide, "in my word." They are both one and the same, as is manifest: and may also appear further by comparing a place in St. John's first epistle: "But whoso keepeth his word, in him, verily, is the love of God perfected. Hereby know we, that we are in him," 1 John ii. 5.

Our Lord having spoken of himself as the living bread that came down from heaven, says, "He that eateth me, shall live by me," John vi. 51. But afterwards, for preventing offence, and making himself clear, he explains the meaning of those expressions. "When Jesus knew in himself, that his disciples murmured at it, he saith unto them, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life," ver. 61, 63.

This shews, that when our Lord speaks of himself, he often means the word taught by him.* And we need not suppose him to say, that no man can do any good thing, without immediate impulses from him. Nor have we reason to think that this is the ordinary way of inducing men to that which is good, or that such impulses are always necessary.

That men may be good and virtuous, it must be their own choice. So far as men are passive, and are acted upon, they are not agents.

Without power to do good or evil, men cannot be moral and accountable beings, and be brought into judgment, or receive according to their works.

If you should say, that men cannot improve the outward advantages afforded to them, nor hearken to the divine calls, nor act according to the light vouchsafed to them, you would justify them, and lay the blame of their wrong conduct upon God himself.

God, in the prophets, laments the refractory temper of the Jewish people, and reproves them for it: "Now because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord: and I spake unto you, rising up early, and ye heard not: and I called, but ye answered not, therefore I will do unto this house, which is called by my name,——as I have done unto Shiloh," Jer. v. 13, 14; see also ver. 25, 26.

But if they had no ability to do good, they might have said, 'We would have answered 'thee, when thou calledst, and would have obeyed thy statutes: but we had no power of our 'own, and thou didst not work effectually in us, and upon us.'

But that is a vindication which no man can bring to God. For our Lord says to the Jews: "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life," John. v. 40. And lamenting the sad case of the city of Jerusalem, he says, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings? and ye would not!" Matt. xxiii. 37.

And in this fifteenth chapter of St. John: "If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak" or excuse "for their sin." And afterwards: "If I had not come, and done among them the works that no other man did, they had not had sin," John xv. 22, 24; that is, no sin in comparison of what they now have; which shews, that men may improve by advantages: and therefore where much is given, there much may be reasonably required.

All which things are so clear, and do so manifestly depend upon the supposition of men having a natural power in them to do good or evil, that it may be wondered it should be questioned: and to contest and deny it, seems to be contrary to all sense and reason: and to overthrow all notion of duty and obligation.

Against so clear texts as have been now produced, and against such cogent arguments, it must be in vain to allege texts, which, probably, in their true meaning, do not at all contradict these things.

Our Lord says: No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," John vi. 44. But those words do not import immediate impulses: the meaning is, 'no 'man will come to me and receive my pure, sublime, and spiritual doctrine, unless he have 'first gained some just apprehensions concerning the general principles of religion. And if a 'man have some good notion of God, and his perfections, and his will, as already revealed, he 'will come unto me.' If any man be well disposed, if he have a love of truth, and a desire to advance in virtue and religious knowledge, he will readily hearken to me and believe in me.

That this is the meaning, may with high degrees of probability be concluded from other texts, in which our Lord tells the Jews: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the

* "'I can do all these things through Christ who strengtheneth me,' [Phil. iv. 13,] that is, through the directions of Christ, and through the arguments and motives of the Christian doctrine." Dr. Jer. Hunt's Sermons, Vol. III. p. 108.

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doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself," John vii. 17. And, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me," ver. 46, and from many other texts to the like purpose. It is also evident from the words next following those which we are considering. "It is written in the prophets: And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me," John vi. 45; which is saying, in other words, what was just observed by us: that if any man by serious consideration, and particularly by attending to former revelations, has gained just apprehensions of God, he will come unto me, and submit himself to be my disciple, to be farther instructed by me.

Would any say, that the necessity of immediate and particular influences from Christ himself is implied in this context: where he says, that "he is a vine," and his disciples "branches," and that their bearing fruit depends as much upon influences from him, as the life and vigour of branches depend upon the sap derived from the root of a tree? It would be easy to answer, that the argument in the text is a similitude, not literal truth. Neither is Christ, literally, a vine: nor are his disciples, strictly speaking, branches. Men have a reasonable, intellectual nature, above animals and vegetables. They are not governed by irresistible, and necessary, or mechanical powers. But it is sound doctrine, and right principles, particularly the words of Christ, which are the words of God, that are their life, and may, and will, if attended to, powerfully enable them to practise good works, and to excel, and persevere therein. Which brings me to the third and last observation for illustrating this text and context.

Prop. 3. They who understand, and have a strict regard to the true doctrine of Christ, the principles of the gospel, will be able to practise good works, and abound therein, and be steady under difficulties: whereas, if they should disregard it, or corrupt it, they would perform nothing considerable and excellent.

I think this must be allowed to be the design of this context: and I need not enlarge much farther.

Every considerate person may perceive, that the gospel, as it teaches and inculcates universal holiness and virtue; sobriety, righteousness, and godliness; so it sets before men the strongest arguments, or affords the best helps for attaining real excellence. True religion and virtue are taught by Jesus Christ in all their sublimity and perfection: the worship of God in spirit and truth: doing good from a principle of love to God, a desire of his favour, and hopes of rewards from him, without views to worldly honours and advantages: resignation to the disposals of Providence: maintaining the truth in all circumstances: of which virtues the Lord Jesus himself was a conspicuous and perfect example: who also, after he had died in testimony to the truths taught by him, was raised from the dead, and exalted to glory. And all who follow him sincerely are to be made perfect and happy, like him, and to be for ever with him.

They who attend to this must be disposed to do somewhat considerable. And, if they should meet with temptations, they will be able to surmount them.

Accordingly, the apostles of Jesus, who did "abide in him," and retained his words, did bear much, and good fruit. Their conduct was excellent and exemplary: and they could endure shame and all manner of sufferings for his name's sake, and in hope of partaking in the recompenses of his heavenly kingdom.

Under what discouragements Peter with the eleven first preached the gospel at Jerusalem, and under what discouragements it was professed by their first converts, and by many others afterwards, the history in the Acts, and other things in the epistles of the apostles, plainly shew.

And the power and efficacy of the divine word are attested to by every part of scripture.

Says holy David: "Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to thy word;" Ps. cxix. 9. And, "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee," ver. 11.

The word of God is represented as the great mean of forming, and of cherishing and improving good dispositions. The Christians, to whom St. Peter writes, "had purified themselves in obeying the truth:" And had been "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible," even "by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," 1 Pet. i. 22, 23. And he exhorts them, "as new-born babes, to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby," ch. ii. 2. And St. James: "Receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls," James i. 21.

What St. Paul says at Miletus to the elders of Ephesus, is very observable: "Wherefore I

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take you to record this day, that I am free from the blood of all men: for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God——And, now, brethren, I recommend you to God, and to the word of his grace: which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified," Acts xx. 26, 27.

How earnest, and how frequent that apostle is in exhorting Christians to retain the pure gospel of Christ, in order to their establishment and increase in virtue, is well known to all men. He and Barnabas visited the churches which they had planted, "confirming the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith," Acts xiv. 22. And to the Colossians he writes: "You that were sometime alienated,——hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard," Col. i. 21—23.

II. I shall now mention two or three remarks briefly, by way of application.

1. We may hence infer that, generally speaking, sad will be the condition of those, who having once known the doctrine of the gospel, afterwards forsake and disown it, and wilfully act contrary to its holy laws and commandments.

The apostles of Christ in their epistles, make the supposition of such instances, and speak of them with much concern, as past hope. It would be exceeding difficult to renew them again to repentance," Heb. vi. 6; and "it had been better for them, not to have known the way of righteousness, than to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them," 2 Pet. ii. 21.

2. This discourse of our Lord with his disciples should induce us to a strict regard to his genuine doctrine.

This is the best way to be steady and eminent in things excellent and commendable. We have not seen Christ; but we have good reason to believe in him and love him. His words and his works, and all his transactions on this earth for our welfare, have been carefully transmitted to us. We should abide in him, and endeavour to know more the power of his death and resurrection, and all the forcible considerations which his doctrine contains to the practice of virtue and perseverance therein.

3. We here see cause to lament the degeneracy of Christians, and the absurdities that have been introduced into the Christian profession.

Says God with regard to the Jewish people: "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed. How then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me!" Jer. ii. 21. The statutes delivered to the people of Israel were good and right. The laws of moral righteousness had the preference: and the others were wisely ordained at that time, and suited to answer valuable ends. Nevertheless they diverted to idolatry, or made additions of human observances, to the great detriment of true piety. The doctrine of Jesus is excellent and important: and yet numberless superstitions and absurdities have been grafted in. Whence comes this? It is because men do not attend to their true interest; because they do not love truth and simplicity: and so it has been from the beginning. "God made man upright: but they have sought out many inventions." Ecc. vii. 29.

We should not be offended. The fault is not in the doctrine itself: nor has Providence been wanting in any thing requisite for the good of men. And our Lord foresaw and foretold what has since happened. Good grain was sowed in the field: but whilst men were negligent, an enemy has cast in tares, which have sprung up and mingled with the good corn, Matt. xiii. 24, 25.

This should excite our care and diligence: and with a sincere love of truth we should study and endeavour to understand the religion of Jesus Christ. It is not, in its original form, the most mysterious, loaded with doctrines hard to be believed; either almost or quite contradictory. The worship which it teaches is not the most showy and pompous that ever was contrived; consisting of a long and tedious ceremonial, in which a hypocrite might be as exact and punctual as any man: but it is undissembled virtue, from a respect to God, and hope of his favour.

If all men would receive this excellent doctrine, and come under the power of it, the world might be happy, and our life here on earth easy and comfortable. But as such an agreeable scene has not yet appeared, and we are not able to reconcile all men to truth and virtue; the knowing, and pious, and zealous for God will often meet with difficulties: but then here comes

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into their aid the prospect of a great joy set before them. Hence this struggle and contention; this holy warfare: which we must resolve upon if called out to it, and should acquit ourselves like men. Here is a difficulty. But this contention gives occasion for the exercise and improvement of virtue; and so lays the foundation of transcendent glory and happiness hereafter. And "our light affliction, which is but for a moment," according to the sublime apprehensions of the apostle, "worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17.

SERMON XV.

A RECOMMENDATION OF THINGS VIRTUOUS, LOVELY, AND OF GOOD REPORT.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think of these things.—Philip. iv. 8.

In these words, and those which follow, we have the concluding exhortations and advices of the apostle to the Christians at Philippi. They are brief and concise, yet full and comprehensive: and in them, if any thing of moment had been hitherto omitted, every branch of conduct that has in it any real excellence, or outward comeliness, would be included: and the well-disposed and intelligent Philippians would bring it to mind.

The words of the text may be partly explained in this short paraphrase: 'Finally to conclude 'and sum up all, my brethren, whatever, "things are true," or sincere: "whatever things are 'honest," or grave and venerable: "whatever things are just," or righteous between man and 'man: "whatever things are pure," or chaste: "whatever things are lovely," agreeable and 'amiable: "whatever things are of good report," generally well-spoken of and commended: "if 'there be any virtue, if there be any praise:" and whatever is virtuous and reasonable, worthy 'of praise and commendation: "think of these things:" such things do you attend to, and 'reckon yourselves obliged to observe and practise.'

In farther discoursing on this text I shall

I. Shew, what is meant by "thinking of these things."

II. I shall endeavour to explain and illustrate the several particulars here mentioned.

III. After which I intend to add some reflections by way of application.

I. I would shew what is meant by "thinking of these things."

And doubtless every one presently perceives, that the apostle does not barely intend meditating on them, and contemplating them in a speculative way, but in order to practice. This must be the design of such an exhortation as this. And it is rendered more manifest by the immediately following words. "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard and seen in me, do. And the God of peace shall be with you."

"By thinking of these things," it is likely the apostle means the examining and observing the reasonableness and fitness of them: seriously attending to the several branches of each particular here mentioned: not omitting to take notice of every thing implied and contained therein: observing how far each of these things may be especially suited to their several stations and characters: accounting themselves under an indispensible obligation to practise them as occasions offer: and likewise studying and contriving, how they may be best able to shew an exact and cheerful conformity to such a direction as this, and guard against every thing contrary to it.

II. In the next place I shall endeavour to explain and illustrate the several particulars here recommended.

The first is "whatever things are true." And it should be observed, that this comprehensive word "whatever" is prefixed to every particular. It is used for the sake of brevity. St. Paul designed not to enumerate the several parts of each character here mentioned. But he desires, that his Christian friends and brethren would themselves observe and attend to every thing included in them.

"Whatever things are true," or sincere. There is a truth of words and actions. We are to be sincere and upright in our profession of religion, in the worship of God, and in our dealings with

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men. We should be what we appear to be: and be far from desiring or aiming to be esteemed what we are not, when there is any the least hazard of any damage or injury, thereby accruing, either to religion or to men.

"Whatever things are true, think of these things." Reckon yourselves obliged to every branch of truth and sincerity. Shew a love of truth in your studies and inquiries. And when you are upon good grounds convinced of the truth of any principles, be not shy of owning them upon proper occasions.

Never disown or deny the truths you are convinced of, for any worldly considerations whatever. As you have taken upon you the name of Christians, steadily acknowledge and profess the principles of that doctrine. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, nor be moved from your steadfastness by the reproaches, or other ill-treatment, which you may meet with.

Let your worship of God be sincere and fervent. Never appear before him with your body only: but always worship him in spirit and truth.

In your conversation and dealings with men, whatever is your station and character, maintain your integrity. Be faithful and upright in your words and actions, in your professions of respect and esteem, in your promises and contracts: that no one may have cause to suspect or doubt of your sincerity, and all men who have dealings with you may be readily disposed to confide in you. And never let any be disappointed, or have reason to complain of falsehood, and to repent of the trust they have reposed in you.

"Whatever things are honest." In the margin of some of our bibles the original word is rendered venerable. And in divers places our English translation has the word grave, instead of that in the text. Among the qualifications of a bishop this is one, that "he rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity——Likewise must the deacons be grave——Likewise must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." 1 Tim. iii. 4, 8, 11. In the epistle to Titus. "But speak thou the things that become sound doctrine, that the aged men be sober, grave," Tit. ii. 1, 2. And, "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works, in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity," ver. 7.

These instances may help us more distinctly to conceive the design of the apostle in this place, where the same word is rendered honest. It seems, that he intends to recommend to Christians a concern for their character, a care so to behave, as to secure to themselves some degree of respect and esteem: that they should avoid unbecoming levity in word, action, habit, and outward behaviour, which tends to render men despicable: whereby they appear weak, mean, and of no consequence in the eye of others.

Doubtless the practice of this rule must be different and various, according to men's several characters and stations in the world. We perceive from the texts just cited, that gravity is more especially recommended to the aged, and to those who have the honour of some office or trust in the church. But here St. Paul gives this advice to Christians in general, to reckon themselves obliged to whatever things are honest, grave, or venerable.

It is not needful, nor scarce proper, to be very particular in such a direction as this. Every one who thinks, as St. Paul here desires all Christians to do, may be the best judge what is most suitable to his own station and character. However, such a hint as this in the text may be of use to awaken the attention of every one, and induce men to consider what does best become them in their stations, and what tends to diminish them in the esteem of others. It may be of use to excite men to labour after some useful qualifications, and to be furnished with some valuable branch of knowledge. It may raise a desire of weight and solidity. It tends to caution men against extravagant and excessive mirth. In a word, whatever is becoming, and is rather suited to secure respect, than to expose them to contempt and scorn: and whatever tends to make others wiser and better, rather than what tends to divert and please them: such things men should think of, and reckon themselves obliged to.

"Whatever things are just." A comprehensive rule. And yet its several branches of duty are so obvious, as to be generally known and understood. There is no necessity therefore to enlarge in the enumeration of the several parts of righteousness to be done, or unrighteousness to be avoided. The great difficulty is, to bring men to an equitable temper and disposition of mind: and to subdue self-love and partiality, or an improper affection for worldly things, and their own particular interests: which often mislead them, and cause them to act contrary to the plainest rules. Our blessed Lord therefore comprised and recommended this branch of duty in

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that one convincing and persuasive rule: "All things whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

At other times, however, both Christ and his apostles have insisted on particular duties, and enforced them with very moving considerations.

Here the direction is general. "Whatever things are just, think of them." So consider this point, that you may perform all acts of justice, and avoid every thing unjust, unfair, unequal.

May not a regard to this rule induce some to caution and circumspection in their dealings, and to avoid extending their commerce beyond the measure of their ability? Should not wise and equitable persons take heed, not so much as to run the hazard of ruining those who depend upon them, or deal with them, or trust them? The wisest and best of men are liable to unavoidable and unforeseen accidents. But the thinking on whatever things are just might discourage some schemes and projects, which are as likely to miscarry, as to succeed: and if not successful, may reduce a man beyond the possibility of his returning to all what he has received.

The thinking of this part of duty may also be of use to discourage and prevent an expensive course of life, beyond the proportion of a man's income and substance. For is he to be reckoned just, who consumes in luxury, and excess of any kind, not only his own patrimony, but likewise the right and property of other men?

Might not a respect to every thing that is just be of extensive use, and vast advantage to mankind? and prevent distresses and inconveniences, inexpressible and innumerable!

"Whatever things are just, think of them." Avoid lesser as well as greater acts of injustice. Think what is just and equitable toward those of your own family, whether relatives, servants, or dependents: what is fair and equitable in the way of commerce with other men your equals: what is just and due to superiors and governors: what regard you ought to have for the welfare of the public society, of which you are a part, in whose prosperity you are interested, by the powers of which you are protected in your commerce, and the secure possession of your property. Says St. Paul to the Romans: "Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another," Rom. xiii. 7, 8.

"Whatever things are pure, [or chaste,] think of them." Reckon yourselves obliged to all purity, in body and mind, in thought, word, and action, in every state, and in every age, and part of life, and in every circumstance, upon every occasion. Think and consider, how you may best be able to preserve that purity, which is acceptable to God, for the honour of religion, and your own peace and comfort. Think and consult with yourselves, how you may avoid temptations, and how you may resist and overcome them, if you should unexpectedly and suddenly meet with them. Meddle not with writings where a proper decorum is neglected, or in which, under specious appearances, the worst and most dangerous poison is insinuated. Never be present at indecent shews and spectacles, much less be at any time delighted with them, or applaud them. Decline resolutely, and with the utmost care, ensnaring and vicious conversation. So far from tempting and enticing others, or contributing by any means whatever to their being ensnared, and deluded from the paths of strict sobriety; do what lies in your power as you have opportunity, by the most proper and likely, the most effectual, the most acceptable, or least offensive methods, not only to preserve your own purity, but also to strengthen the wise and holy resolutions of others; that they may be stedfast in their purpose, overcome in a time of temptation, and pass through the world pure and unsullied.

"Whatever things are lovely," or amiable. So the original word seems most properly to signify. But herein, very probably, is included what is loving and friendly. For such things are usually lovely, and agreeable in the eye of the world.

All such things the apostle desires his Christian friends at Philippi to think of: to "follow after the things that make for peace," Rom. xiv. 19, among themselves and others. Says the Psalmist, "How good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psal. cxxxiii. It is not only a great happiness to those persons themselves, but it is likewise agreeable to others to behold and observe.

It is not unlikely, that the apostle intends here some exalted acts of virtue, care of the sick, bounty to the necessitous and indigent, readiness to appear in the behalf of such as are injured by prevailing power, endeavours to clear up doubtful points, and vindicate innocence, accused, censured, and reproached.

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The Philippians, very probably, would be led by this advice, to think of benevolence toward each other, and toward their fellow-christians, and also toward other men, their Heathen and Jewish neighbours: a readiness to do good to them, when they had opportunity and ability, and their services and kind offices would be accepted.

Herein may be also included steadiness in the faith, and in the profession of the truth, free from any appearance of obstinacy, and without unreasonable scorn and disdain of others of different sentiments: a readiness to give a reason of their belief and hope to all who demand it: and doing it with meekness and modesty.

Hereby may likewise be intended condescension upon many occasions, forgiveness of injuries, meekness and gentleness, mildness in precepts and reproofs, and doing every thing, so far as may be, in the most acceptable and agreeable manner.

Once more: Think of whatever things are lovely. Shew an affable carriage to all men. And if any of you have it in your power to be extensively useful, manifest cheerfulness of mind, in such good designs as you engage in, and promote them to the utmost.

Whatever things are of good report, or well spoken of, and generally commended.

But hereby the apostle intends those things only, that are justly commended, or are really commendable. It can never be imagined, that he advises any Christians to pay such deference to prevailing customs as to approve of any thing that is in itself evil. No: Christians were at that time few in number, in comparison of others, and were obliged to be stedfast in the faith, whatever others might think or say of it. And at some seasons, and in some places, there are some so degenerate and corrupt, as to vilify those who join not with them in shameful practices. "For the time past of our life may suffice us," says St. Peter, "to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: wherein they think it strange, that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you," 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. Nevertheless there are some branches of virtue and real goodness, which are generally approved, and well spoken of. St. Peter himself supposeth as much in another exhortation. "Having your conversation honest, [or good, fair and unspotted,] among the gentiles: that whereas they speak against you, as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation," 1 Pet. ii. 12.

This particular may in some measure coincide with the preceding. Such things as are amiable, taking and agreeable, will be generally commended. In both, especially the latter, I apprehend the apostle to recommend some sublime acts of virtue and goodness, which depend upon much self-denial, and consist in discreet compliances, and a departing from our just right upon some occasions, for weighty reasons and considerations, and out of a regard to the honour of religion, or with a view to the welfare and advantage of some particular persons, or the good of society in general.

There are particular directions in some other epistles, which may be recollected by you, and may illustrate this general advice, and help us to discern what is included in it.

In an argument, which the apostle has in the epistle to the Romans, he says, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of," Rom. xiii. 16. The Christian liberty, or freedom from an obligation to observe a distinction of meats, and such like indifferent things, was, in the general, good and reasonable. Yet he advises, not to assert it always, but to decline the so doing, when there should be a manifest danger of offending a weak and scrupulous person, so as to cause him to fall. Whereby it might happen, that what was good would be evil spoken of.

Another particular, which I suppose may suit this general direction, is that in the first epistle to the Corinthians. "I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" 1 Cor. vi. 5—7. Those persons had not a due regard to the circumstances of things. Contention and strife are unreputable among friends and relatives, and those who are of the same religious society and communion. It would therefore have been a good work, if some, who were of the best capacity and understanding among the Christians at Corinth, had endeavoured to reconcile disagreeing parties, and to induce them to make up their differences in an amicable way. And it might have been fit and commendable, supposing un-

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tractableness and obstinacy on one side, if the other would for peace sake quit a part of his right, or what might be justly claimed by him.

And there may be many occasions, wherein this direction will take place and be obligatory. A true Christian, and a wise man, will often think of those things that are of good report, and will resign somewhat, and comply against his own particular interests, when some valuable purposes are to be served thereby.

The last clause in the text is: If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise. In which two particulars it may be either supposed, that the apostle would summarily comprehend every thing already mentioned: or, that he would be understood to say: 'And if there be any thing else that is virtuous and praise-worthy, think of it, and reckon yourselves obliged to it.'

One thing, which I apprehend to be designed and implied, both here and elsewhere, is discretion or prudence: which, certainly, is praise-worthy, for the honour of particular persons and societies, and religion in general.

You are to condescend very often; but yet it must be sometimes without familiarity. You are to reprove with mildness; but yet you are not to connive at faults that are manifest. You are to be kind and charitable; but yet you should not be imposed upon. And it will neither be for your credit, nor for the credit of religion, to maintain the robust and strong in sloth and idleness. You are to comply; but still you must consider, when, to whom, and how far. You are to be courteous and affable and condescending: but yet you should keep the dignity of your character. You should forgive, if men repent and acknowledge their fault: and you should pray for them that persecute you, and speak evil of you. But you are not obliged to confide in all without discrimination, nor to put trust in those who shew enmity to you. There is a necessity of weighing circumstances, and calmly considering persons, tempers, times and seasons. We should join those two considerations, and observe those two properties: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise: whatever things are true, and of good report. Meekness is a virtue. But it is apt sometimes to invite injuries. He who by an imprudent exercise of what he calls meekness, neglects his own safety and security from unreasonable men, and thereby often brings troubles upon himself, and those concerned with him, consults not his own credit, nor the credit and reputation of the religious principles he professes.

These are the several branches of virtue and goodness which the apostle here recommends. And they should be thought of by all in the sense and manner before explained and described. For the exhortation is addressed to all. Every one should think of what suits his station and condition. The bishops or overseers, and the deacons in this church, to whom the apostle was writing, were to attend to and perform the duties of their offices. The rich and the honourable were in like manner to perform the duties of their circumstances and station: they should endeavour to be useful in the world, and think of every thing that is good and laudable. The poor likewise were to think of what suited them, and be resigned, contented, humble, industrious, faithful, thankful. For such things are virtuous, and praise-worthy in them. Such is the exhortation to the Christians of that time: and it is to be attended to by the followers of Jesus in every age.

III. I shall now conclude with a few inferences by way of application.

1. We hence learn, that there are some things, which are fit and excellent in themselves, true, just, and virtuous.

2. We also perceive hence, that the Christian religion teaches and recommends every branch of virtue and goodness: and that Christians ought to reckon themselves obliged to every thing that is true, just, lovely, of good report, virtuous and commendable, according to the stations they are in.

3. The Christian doctrine does not exclude, or altogether neglect and overlook any reasonable argument to the practice of real duty. Indeed many precepts are delivered in the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, in an authoritative way, as the will of God, and with promises of happiness, or threatenings of woe and misery, which none but God can perform and accomplish. Nevertheless arguments from the internal excellence, or the apparent comeliness of things, are not entirely omitted. Nor ought they to be overlooked or slighted by us. The apostle here advises, and directs: "If there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on those things."

4. We cannot easily forbear observing, that this exhortation of the apostle is not only excel-

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lent for the sense, but engaging also for the manner of address. He treats the Philippian Christians as men of understanding. And without a prolix enlargement propounds it to them to think of, and reckon themselves obliged to, "whatever things are true, honest, virtuous and praise-worthy." The same things are now in a like manner proposed to you. The fewer words are used in recommending them, the more do you think of them: that you may be fully satisfied of their reasonableness, and be ever ready to practise them as occasions require, in the most agreeable and acceptable manner.

SERMON XVI.

THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR WORDS.

But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.—Matt. xii. 36.

In the preceding part of this chapter several things are related, which may be reckoned to have given occasion for what is here said. To observe those particulars therefore, may conduce very much to the better understanding of our Lord's design in these words.

One thing, related at the beginning of this chapter, is our Lord's going through fields of corn, and the reflections cast upon the disciples by the Pharisees for plucking ears of corn on the sabbath day, together with his vindication of the disciples from those reflections.

Afterwards is an account of our Lord's meekness in withdrawing from the Pharisees, who sought to apprehend him, with a general character of the mildness of his ministry.

After which, notice is taken of a miracle wrought by the Lord Jesus, and the false and injurious charge of the Pharisees, that "he cast out dæmons by Beelzebub, their prince:" and the reproof of those who therein had blasphemed the Holy Ghost. Which sin he declares would not be forgiven, "neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." And then he adds these general observations in his teaching, "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good: or else make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt. For the tree is known by its fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye being evil speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things. And an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

I. In explaining and improving this text I would first consider, what our Lord calls an "idle word."

II. In what sense our Lord is to be understood: and how we can be justified by our words, when good: and condemned by them, when they are evil.

III. I shall inquire into the reason of this sentence of justification, or condemnation.

IV. And then, in the fourth and last place, I intend to conclude with some remarks, by way of application.

I. In the first place, we will consider what our Lord calls an "idle word."

And here it must be owned, that there is some variety of explication among pious and learned interpreters.

Some by idle word understand the same as unprofitable. They think this to be the best interpretation, and that the word ought not to be restrained to false and injurious words, such as are spoken of in the preceding context. They judge our Lord to argue from the less to the greater, to convince the Pharisees, how dreadful an account they must give of their blasphemous and reproachful speeches: when all men must give an account even of useless words, which they speak to no good purpose, but vainly; without respect either to the glory of God, or the good of others, or their own necessary and lawful occasions.

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So some. Others hereby rather understand false, reproachful, hurtful words: the word vain, or idle, according to the Hebrews, being often used for deceitful, false, lying. The third commandment in the Law of Moses is thus expressed: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Thou shalt take care, never to make use of the name of God to attest and support a falsehood. When Pharaoh issued a severe order against the Israelites, to increase their labour, it is added: "And let them not regard vain words," Exod. v. 9; or false and deceitful speeches. Hosea, ch. xii. 1. "Ephraim feedeth on the wind, and followeth after the east wind. He daily increaseth lies and desolation." In the ancient Greek version, the style of which is often very agreeable to that of the writers of the New Testament, the text is rendered in this manner: "Ephraim daily increaseth vain and unprofitable things." And Micah, ch. i. 14. "The house of Achzib shall be a lie to the kings of Israel." In the same ancient version it is, "shall be vain to the kings of Israel." Habb. ii. 3. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak, and not lie." In the same ancient Greek version, "it shall not be in vain." And St. Paul, "Let no man deceive you with vain [or false] words: for because of these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience," Eph. v. 6.

And the coherence likewise countenanceth this sense: for of this sort are the words spoken by the Pharisees. At the beginning of the chapter they are related to have cast reflections on Christ's disciples, to prejudice their character without reason. Afterwards they are said to have blasphemed our Lord's miracles, done by the finger of God, ascribing them to the prince of evil spirits. And our Lord, representing the real guilt, and great malignity of that sin, does also take notice of some other reproachful speeches concerning himself, which seem to have been more especially personal. "Wherefore I say unto you: all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come," ver. 31, 32. Where, by "speaking against the Son of man," seem to be intended those false characters given of our Lord by some, of his being "a glutton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners:" consisting of false and injurious representations of some part of his conduct, and embraced by some who were little acquainted with him or his works.

We might farther argue, that this is the design of our Lord from what is said at ver. 34, 35: "How can ye being evil speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." Whereupon follow the declarations and observations of the text.

All this may well incline us to think, that by idle words our Lord does not mean those words which are insignificant and unprofitable, and have no immediate tendency to promote some good; but rather such words as are evil, false, injurious and detrimental to men's personal characters, or to the interests of religion.

II. Secondly, we are to consider, how men can be justified by their words, if they are good; and how they can be condemned by them, if evil.

It is what our Lord here declares expressly and strongly. And the justification, or acquittal, and the condemnation or censure, relate to the solemn transactions of the great day; when men's characters and states shall be finally and for ever determined; and not barely to any sentences of applause or disgrace in this world. These are our Lord's expressions: "But I say unto you, that every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment: for by thy words thou shalt be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

But how can this be? Are there not other things that will be taken into consideration in the day of judgment beside men's words? Yes, certainly. According to the doctrine of our Saviour, there are evil thoughts and evil actions as well as evil words, which shall be examined into, censured, and punished. And there are good thoughts and useful works, which are highly acceptable in the sight of God.

The design of our Lord therefore is, to assure men, that their words also are of great importance. Men are often apt to be very heedless in this respect. They indulge great freedom of speech, not being duly apprehensive of the consequences of good or bad words. And our Lord,

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upon the Pharisees reviling his miracles, takes occasion to discourse upon the point, and delivers this doctrine: that men's words will come into consideration in the day of judgment. Whatever some may think, or endeavour to persuade themselves, this is the judgment of God: their words are of no small moment. God observes them now, and will call men to an account for them hereafter: and sometimes their words alone may be found sufficient to decide men's characters.

III. Which brings me to the third particular, to shew the reasonableness of justifying or condemning men by their words.

One reason is, that a great deal is in the power of the tongue. Good or bad discourse has a great effect and influence on the affairs of the world. As St. James says, "the tongue," though "a little member, boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity,—and setteth on fire the whole course of nature," James iii. 5, 6. The abuse of the tongue in false and injurious speeches is often prejudicial and ruinous to the good character and prosperity of particular persons, and to the peace and quietness of whole societies. "The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly," Prov. xviii. 8. St. Paul exhorts: "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, be put away from you with all malice," Eph. iv. 25; also ver. 31, 32.

False and injurious words are evil and vicious. And there is virtue in good words: in vindicating the characters of the injured, pleading the cause of the oppressed, reconciling differences, recommending peace and friendship, and fowarding any good and useful designs.

Solomon says: "A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his lips. And the recompense of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him," Prov. xii. 14; that is, the author of good counsel and advice, whether in private or public concerns, will reap advantage by it. And a man shall be recompensed for good words as well as for good actions.

Again: "A man shall eat good by the fruit of his mouth: but the soul of the transgressors shall eat violence," ch. xiii. 2; that is, he who gives men good and faithful counsel, or he who speaks well of others, as they deserve, will have a benefit by it. And they also who injuriously calumniate and revile others: or who deceive men by their speeches, shall in the end suffer the like evils which they bring upon others.

Good words then are virtuous, and evil words are unrighteous: and oftentimes, even in this world, meet with suitable recompenses of peace, comfort, and credit on the one hand; of trouble, vexation, reproach, and disgrace on the other.

But there is another thing still more material, which may fully shew the justness of our Lord's declaration, and the reasonableness of men being hereafter justified or condemned by their words: for as men's words are, so are their hearts. Their speeches shew the real, habitual frame of the mind. Our Lord says as much in this context: and therefore he himself leads us to this true ground and reason of his declaration. "Either make the tree good, and its fruit will be good:" or "else make the tree corrupt, and its fruit will be corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit." The evident design of which instance is to teach those to whom our Lord was speaking, that men's words as well as their actions, shewed their real temper. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" ver. 34. You yourselves are an instance of it. The evil affections of covetousness and ambition prevail in your breasts: and whilst they do, you will not speak right things: "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things." If a man's mind be filled with just sentiments, and pious affections, and useful designs, his words will shew it. They will be such as shall tend to promote and recommend religion and virtue, and to encourage good and upright persons. "And an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." A man of an evil mind will shew it in his discourses. With reason therefore does he add, "that men will be justified or condemned by their words:" for their words shew their inward temper, and what are the prevailing habits of their minds: in short, what men themselves are.

This may be made farther manifest by obvious instances. Irreligious discourses shew a man not to be religious. Falsehood and lying in a man's dealings declare him to be covetous and unrighteous. Detraction and calumny demonstrate a man to be destitute of true love for his neighbour. Arrogant and vainglorious expressions flow from pride in the heart: and frequently men's words, as well as actions, shew that they have in them neither the fear of God nor a love for men.

Several things in the preceding context, if reviewed, will confirm this point.

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The first is that of the Pharisees reflecting upon the disciples for gathering, when hungry, some ears of corn on the sabbath-day. Wherein they shewed a malicious disposition: the law dispensing with the bodily rest of the sabbath upon divers occasions; and they themselves approving of it in many cases. By those reflections they shewed a greater regard to some positive appointments, than to the eternal laws of equity and righteousness. Therefore our Lord says to them: "If ye had known what that meant, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless."

The reflections upon our Lord's person and character were of a like kind: "when they spake evil of the Son of man," and represented him as "gluttonous, and a wine-bibber," though he was guilty of no excess. Thereby they shewed a want of respect to truth, and of love for their neighbour. So likewise when they called him "a friend of publicans and sinners," because he was sometimes in company where they were: insinuating thereby, that he countenanced their unrighteous actions and wicked lives; whereas he vouchsafed to be present with them for no other end, but to reform and amend them: and he reproved what was amiss in every one; and expressed favour toward none but those who shewed a regard to real holiness. And the pleasure he had in the repentance of sinners was no other than is to be found in the purest spirits in heaven. In these reflections therefore they betrayed a want of a due regard to truth, and to the good name and credit of men.

Their reviling our Lord's miracles, and ascribing them to the power of Satan, and a combination between him and the kingdom of darkness, shewed an inveterate, malicious disposition: for our Lord's doctrine was pure and holy; and it was impossible that evil spirits should encourage it. Miracles they allowed, in other cases, to be a proof of the divine approbation and concurrence. It was therefore owing to prevailing pride, ambition, covetousness, envy and malice, that such words proceeded out of their mouths.

In a word, their many hard speeches and false reflections upon Jesus and his disciples, shewed that they had not the love of God in their hearts, and that they were destitute of all religious dispositions of mind. Our blessed Lord says at ver. 30, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that is not with me scatters abroad." The tendency of my doctrine is such, so holy, so reasonable, so directly for the glory of God, so manifestly suited to promote and strengthen the interests of true religion in the world. And the works I do are so great and conspicuous, that every one who sees them, or hears of them, must heartily approve of my designs, if he love religion and virtue. And if any man, acquainted with my teaching and conduct, asperse me, and revile my works, with a view to disparage the doctrine, and hinder men from receiving it, he manifests that he has not at heart the honour of God and the cause of religion; but only some private interests of his own, or of some sect or party.

These things we know our Lord often told the Jews plainly, that "they did not hear his word, because they were not of God:" that "they did not believe, because they sought honour one of another, and not that honour which cometh from God only." And their injurious reflections upon him, and his doctrine, and his works, and his disciples, proceeded from the like bad dispositions, and shewed that they were destitute of religion, and under the power of vicious habits.

By their words then men may be condemned; for they shew what men really are.

By their words also men may be justified; some by their discourses tending to the honour of God, and the good of men: recommending with mildness, yet assiduity, as occasions offer, the great principles of religion, and the important branches of true holiness, vindicating men's characters unjustly traduced, shewing the reasonableness of mutual love and forbearance among men of different sentiments: embracing all opportunities for withdrawing men from sin and folly, and bringing them to a discreet and amiable behaviour: I say, by these and such like good fruits, some shew, that the tree is good. They are good men, and out of the good treasure of the heart they bring forth good things.

This point might also be farther illustrated by some particular instances in the gospels. Our Lord says: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven," Matt. x. 32. And some there were in his time who made such professions of their faith in him, or so pleaded his cause, as to shew by those words their good dispositions: in like manner as the Pharisees, by their false and injurious reflections, shewed the bad dispositions of their minds.

When Peter answered, and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Matt.

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xvi. 16, our Lord declared him blessed. At another time, when many forsook him, and walked no more with him, and he asked the disciples, whether they also would go away, Peter answered, "Lord, to whom should we go! Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we know, and are assured, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," John vi. 68. Peter thereby shewed a good and virtuous disposition of mind. Though he was not perfect, and upon some occasions manifested an undue affection for earthly things; yet he had a superior and prevailing regard for things divine and heavenly.

Nicodemus too shewed himself a good man by his words. He was sincere though defective. He came to Jesus by night, and made an honest profession: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God. For no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." John iii. 2. Some good while after this, when the council had sent forth officers to take Jesus, and they returned with a great character of him and his discourses, and the Pharisees were thereupon offended. "Nicodemus said unto them: Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he does?" John vii. 50, 51. He had a sincere respect for the rules of justice and equity, as he plainly manifests by that apology, spoken at the hazard of his credit among men.

The man born blind, whose history is related in the ninth chapter of St. John's gospel, shewed an honest and virtuous mind by his words. His eyes had been opened on a sabbath day. The Pharisees pretended to take offence at that circumstance, and examined the man about his cure: who gave them a clear and distinct account how his eyes had been opened. After much discourse they say unto him: "We know that God spake unto Moses. As for this man, we know not from whence he is. He answered and said unto them: Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is. And yet he has opened my eyes. Now, we know, that God heareth not sinners. But if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began, was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." This resolute defence of the character of Jesus, in the view of much disgrace, and particularly of excommunication, which he afterwards underwent, manifested a grateful, and virtuous, and religious disposition of mind. Men therefore may be justified by their words.

IV. Nothing now remains, but that I mention a remark or two by way of application.

1. No one may hence infer, that he may be saved by a fair profession of religion without good works.

Our Lord assures us, that men's words will be taken into consideration in the day of judgment. And by them they may be acquitted or condemned. But other things will be considered also, both thoughts and outward actions. And if men are justified by their words, it is when they are virtuous, and shew a good habit and disposition of mind. And when good words proceed from a good mind, they will not be alone. There will be good works, as well as good words.

2. We have here a mark, which may be of good use for determining our sincerity or insincerity.

This is a thing about which sometimes we would be glad to be satisfied. Men may in a good measure judge of us by our words. But we can better judge concerning this matter ourselves: because upon recollection we may know, what are our more ordinary discourses. And thereby we may judge of the temper of our minds, and what is the "abundance" of our hearts. Are our discourses generally unprofitable, uncharitable, censorious, or worse, tending to excite vicious inclinations and propensities, or to lessen the obligations and evidences of religion? Our words then shew, we are not good men, and by our words we may be condemned. On the other hand, are we often engaged in such discourses as tend to the edification of others? or are they calculated to improve ourselves, that we may receive instruction, and confirmation in truth and virtue? We have reason to be pleased with such an evidence of a religious temper of mind.

3. The doctrine of this text teaches us to be careful of our words. For they will be taken into account in the day of judgment.

Whatever be the direct meaning of the expression idle, we ought not to make it a foundation of needless scruples: as if we were restrained from that mirth which is innocent, and consistent with sobriety, and diligence in our callings: and only tends to refresh our spirits, and fit for more important business. At the same time the observations of our Lord in the text and context plainly teach us the moment of our words, and that they are of greater consequence than some imagine. We should therefore be careful, that our words be not such as tend to the detriment, but to the good of our neighbour: that they do not favour irreligion and wickedness: but that we

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take the side of religion and virtue in our discourses. Let us cheerfully applaud the well meant endeavours of all men. Let us acknowledge and encourage meekness, modesty, and other amiable virtues in those who are not of our mind in some speculative points. Nor let us justify, but rather condemn and discountenance pride, conceit, censoriousness, rigour and uncharitableness in those who are of the same sentiments with us. By such words we may be justified. They shew a religious and virtuous mind. They may not be approved by all men: but they will be remembered by the equitable Judge in the great day of account.

And indeed this declaration of our Lord may be reckoned very gracious and encouraging. There are words, as well as works, that shall be rewarded. And there is a fitness in it, as we have seen. For by our words we may do a great deal of good. And if from our hearts we design, and actually do by our discourses honour God, serve religion, and good men, or reclaim the bad, and turn the feet and hearts of sinners to righteousness; such words shall be joined with good works, and add to the recompences of the future life.

4. Lastly, we may hence discern, that the Lord Jesus was a most excellent person, and is entitled to the esteem, respect, and gratitude of all sincere friends of religion and virtue.

It is one part of his excellent character, that "never man spake like him," John vii. 46. And he was ever ready to good words. Every where he instils good doctrine. He embraceth every opportunity to inculcate the principles and duties of religion, the love of God and our neighbour. He taught not only at the temple, and in the synagogues, but in every other place, and in every company that was favoured with his presence. He preached the gospel to the poor, as well as to the rich. And the most weighty things are often spoken by him in a free and familiar manner. A large part of his instructive, edifying, enlivening discourses, recorded in the gospels, were delivered in conversation with his disciples or others: and always free from partiality and ostentation: seeking not his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him, and the benefit of those to whom he was sent, and with whom he conversed.

SERMON XVII.

THE DIFFICULTY OF GOVERNING THE TONGUE.

If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body.
James iii. 2.

St. James is much in correcting the faults of the tongue. Possibly the Jewish believers, to whom he writes, were too liable to be infected with the faults very common at that time in the rest of their countrymen, who had an impetuous and turbulent zeal: who were conceited of themselves and despised others: and were imposing and uncharitable. That may be one reason why this writer insists so much, and so frequently, upon this matter.

In the very first chapter, ver. 19, he exhorts with affectionate earnestness: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." And again, ver. 26, "If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, deceiving his own heart, that man's religion is vain." In this chapter he enlargeth upon the point. Some of his expressions are extremely strong, saying, that "the tongue can no man tame:" James iii. 8. meaning, however, no more than that it is very difficult for a man to govern his own tongue, or to teach others that skill. For we are not to suppose that he intends to say, that it is altogether impossible. This may be inferred from his exhortations. He would not be at the pains to admonish and argue as he does, if there were no hopes of success. He would not, then, have said: "My brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." He would not have argued, and shewn the inconsistency of "blessing God," and "cursing men," James iii. 9; nor have added: "My brethren, these things ought not so to be," ver. 10. Such admonitions and reproofs are delivered upon the supposition of the happy effects of great care in this matter. And here, in the text, it is admitted, that some may, and do attain to a great degree of perfection in this respect.

We are not to suppose, then, that St. James designs to say, the government of the tongue is

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absolutely impossible. Much less are we to think that he intends to censure the faculty of speech, when he says, "the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity," James iii. 6. No! he only aims, by emphatical expressions, and pathetic arguments, to correct the abuses of it; which were very great and frequent, as it seems among the Christians to whom he writes, as well as among many other persons. David sometimes speaks of his tongue, as "his glory," it being fitted to celebrate the praises of God. Indeed the communication which we have with each other, and the many advantages of society depend upon it. And the organs of speech are admirable. The dispositions made for it are beyond the description of the most eloquent tongue, and above all the force of human language. Nor is it at all strange, that the thing formed should not be able to comprehend, or fully commend the wisdom and skill of its former.

St. James begins this chapter with a caution against the office and character of a teacher, as was very common among the Jewish people, and against exercising it with too great rigour and severity. "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation," if we offend, which it is very difficult to avoid: "for in many things we all offend. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body." 'But if there be any man among you that does not offend in speech, he is an excellent man, 'and able to manage all the other parts of the body:' or, as some thereby understand, the whole church, the body of Christian people among whom he resides. 'He is qualified for the office 'and station of a teacher of others, and is likely to be very useful and serviceable therein.'

In farther discoursing on this text I shall observe the following method.

I. I shall shew somewhat distinctly the difficulty of governing the tongue.

II. I shall propose some motives and considerations, tending to engage us to do our best to govern the tongue.

III. I intend to lay down some rules and directions which may be of use to assist us in obtaining this excellence and perfection.

I. In the first place I would shew the difficulty of governing the tongue, the point so largely insisted on, and so emphatically represented in this chapter.

The difficulty of this will appear by these particulars: the great number of those who offend in word, the many faults which the tongue is liable to, and the springs and causes of transgressions of this kind.

1. The difficulty of governing the tongue may be argued from hence, that great numbers of men offend in their words.

There are many who scarce set any guard upon their expressions, as if their tongue was their own, and subject to no law, and they had a right to annoy others at pleasure. Yea some who have had the character of goodness, have transgressed here by falsehood, or hastiness of speech, or other ways. An offence of this kind is taken notice of in Moses himself, who was so remarkable for meekness. "They angred him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sake; because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips," Psalm cvi. 32, 33; referring, probably, to what is recorded in Numb. xx. 10. "And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto him: "Hear now, ye rebels: must we fetch you water out of this rock?"

But I need not insist farther on this particular; though it may be of some use to satisfy us of the difficulty of governing the tongue, that men of excellent characters, who have been almost faultless in other respects, have been surprised into some offences of this sort.

2. Another thing which shews the difficulty of governing the tongue, is the many offences it is liable to.

I need not enumerate them all; but it is very obvious that they are numerous. Some are guilty of a light and frequent use, or bold profanation of the name of God. Others are murmurers and complainers: and because every thing in the world is not to their mind, they take great liberties in complaining of the methods of Providence, or the conduct of their superiors and governors.

There are obscene discourses, called by the apostle "corrupt" and "filthy communication," Eph. iv. 29; Col. iii. 8. which ought not to proceed out of the mouth of a Christian.

Falsehood is supposed to be a very common fault in the dealings of men one with another: where truth ought to be strictly regarded, as the great bond of society, and of confidence in each other.

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Abusive speeches, proceeding from anger or contempt, are too common among men. Our blessed Lord has condemned all such expressions when he shews the guilt of those who say to their brother, "Racha," or, "thou fool," Matt. v. 22. How apt are some, upon occasion of slight provocations, to break forth into very abusive and contemptuous language against those who have, or are supposed to have, disobliged them!

Calumny is another great fault of the tongue, which too many are guilty of, for carrying on selfish designs, and to weaken and disparage their enemies or rivals. And many arts of detraction there are, divulging lesser faults that might be concealed or passed by, without detriment to any: aggravating the known offences of men, lessening the merit of good and commendable actions, or converting actions that are innocent, or at the most suspicious only, into heinous transgressions.

Flattery is another fault of the tongue, and an abuse of the noble faculty of speech: when, to carry on designs of private interest, we deceive men, by ascribing to them excellencies they are destitute of, and thus fill them with an empty conceit of imaginary worth, and encourage sloth and indolence, or otherwise mislead them to their great detriment.

Ridicule, ill applied, is another fault of the tongue. Some make a mock at sin, and would scoff away the weighty and awful truths of religion. Some endeavour to bring the sacred scriptures into contempt. Others expose their neighbours by ridiculing the natural defects and infirmities of the body or the mind, which are no real faults, but their own unhappiness.

There is a fault, which we may stile the uncharitableness of the tongue: when men strive to lessen all those who differ from them in opinion, representing them as prejudiced, or destitute of a love of truth, and out of the favour of God and the way of salvation. And accordingly they pronounce hard and unmerciful sentences of condemnation upon them. St. James seems particularly to have an eye to this conduct: and he shews, that it cannot proceed from a principle of true religion. It may indeed consist with a profession of religion: but it is inconsistent with virtue and true piety. Sincere praises of God, and severe and unrighteous sentences against our neighbour, can no more proceed from the same mind, than bitter and sweet water from one and the same fountain. Consequently, if men so condemn their brother, their love of God is not sincere and genuine. So in his argument, ver. 9, 10, "Therewith bless we God, and therewith curse we men, made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?"

Another fault of the tongue, which we are sometimes guilty of, is too great severity of reproof and censure of real offences and miscarriages. This is one thing which St. James has an eye to in this context, when he cautions against being many masters; intending to soften the rigour of those who are forward in taking upon them that character. St. Paul has particularly cautioned against the same thing. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted," Gal. vi. 1.

Another fault of the tongue is talkativeness, or a multitude of words, in which, as Solomon says, "there wanteth not sin," Prov. x. 19. This fault St. James has an eye to in several of his directions and observations in this epistle, particularly in the text above cited: "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." Where he seems to condemn talkativeness, abstracting from the consideration of what is said; when men speak with little or no regard to, or thought of, doing good or harm. Which, though it may seem an indifferent matter, or of no great consequence, yet an indulgence of such a disposition leads men into many offences; inasmuch as when innocent or indifferent topics of discourse are exhausted, such will not fail, in order to gratify that disposition, to go into defamation and scandal: so it is in conversation: and the like temper will shew itself on other occasions. Some may desire to be "teachers of the law," 1 Tim. i. 7, who are unacquainted with its design: and may affect prolixity of discourse, and use a multitude of words, not because their subject requires it, but to gratify the disposition to discourse, and an ambition of shining as very knowing men, and fluent speakers.

These and other faults there are of the tongue: and this is one thing that shews the difficulty of governing it.

3. And we shall be farther satisfied of this, if we consider the causes and springs of these faults: and there are many of them. This was observed by St. James. Does he say of the tongue at ver. 6, "That it setteth on fire the whole course of nature?" He adds: "And it is set on

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fire of hell." There are within bad principles, that give the tongue this wrong direction, and set it on work for mischief. Blasphemy, or evil-speaking, is one of those defilements which our Lord says "come from the heart," that is, from some bad disposition there. And St. James, ver. 14, 15, "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish."

The causes of the offences of the tongue are such as these. Unbelief and discontent. These were the causes of the murmurings and complaints of the people of Israel against God and Moses, in the wilderness: and the many murmurings and complaints of men in all ages, are owing to the like causes. Other springs and principles of faulty discourse are inordinate self-love, pride, arrogance, envy and ill-will, contempt of other men, and a disregard to their interests, covetousness, emulation and ambition. These lead men into falsehood and defamation, for promoting their own gain, and lessening those whom they envy, or whose influence stands in their way. St. Paul speaks of some who "taught things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake." Tit. 1. 11. Some depart from the truth, and forward erroneous conceits, because they are pleasing. Detraction is one way of lessening those who are eminent, and of carrying a point against them. St. John had experience of this, and therefore says in his third epistle: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words."

These, and other causes there are of the offences of the tongue. And when it is considered how difficult it is to root all these bad principles out of the heart of man, it must be apparent, that governing the tongue is no easy thing: for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Matt. xii. 34. The streams will partake of the qualities of the fountain; and according to the root, so will the fruit be.

II. In the second place some arguments should be mentioned, to induce us to use our best endeavours to bridle the tongue.

And St. James does presently furnish us with three considerations to this purpose: first, the importance of the thing to the good of the world. Secondly, its importance to us: forasmuch as without it our religion would be vain. And thirdly, it is a great perfection.

1. The importance of this matter. St. James has illustrated this by several instances and comparisons, the "bit in the horse's mouth, the helm of ships," and "fire," a spark of which kindles into a devouring flame. That is, the use or abuse of the tongue is of much importance, and great things, for good or evil, are effected thereby, in the state, in lesser societies, and among particular persons. By the right use of the tongue truth is recommended, virtue promoted, the peace and happiness of mankind advanced. By a perverse employment of speech the peace of society, of families, and particular persons, is interrupted and disturbed: the interests of error are promoted, instead of those of truth: good designs are obstructed, or quite defeated: the reputation of innocent, and even excellent men, is blasted: seeds of animosity and dissension are sown among brethren, friendships broken and dissolved, and many bad effects produced, more than can be easily numbered.

How much did Joseph suffer by the calumny of his mistress! how long, before his reputation could be vindicated, or his innocence cleared up! And sometimes the reputation of the innocent and virtuous is for ever ruined by malicious and artful detraction. We have a remarkable instance of the bad effect of a studied misrepresentation of things in the history of David. When he fled from Jerusalem, on occasion of Absalom's rebellion, Ziba, servant of Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, came to David, bringing him presents. "And David said unto him: Where is thy master? And Ziba said unto the king: Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said: To day shall the house of Israel restore me to the kingdom of my father. Then said the king to Ziba: Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth," 2 Sam. xvi. 3, 4. But when David returned victorious, and in safety, to Jerusalem, it appeared, that during the time of his absence, Mephibosheth had lived with all the outward tokens of mourning and affliction, without putting on his usual ornaments, or taking the refreshments, customary in times of peace and prosperity. "And when he met the king, David said unto him: Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth? And he answered: My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For thy servant said: I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king, because thy servant is lame. And he has slandered thy servant unto my lord the king. But my lord the king is an angel of God. Do therefore what is good in thy eyes." What now is the answer,

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which David makes to Mephibosheth, after so submissive a speech, and so full a defence of himself? It is this. "The king said unto him: Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said: Thou and Ziba divide the land." An answer, if we may presume to judge, unworthy of David. It seems to shew that Ziba's story still made impressions upon him, and that he was not fully reconciled to Mephibosheth: or else, that he was unwilling to own how much he had been deceived and imposed upon by the artifice of Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant. Such effect had flattery and slander, improbable slander, upon the mind of king David.

David seems not now to have recollected the resolutions which he had formed, the plan of government which he had laid down to himself before his settlement on the throne of Israel. When he said: "Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house. He that telleth lies shall not abide in my sight," Psalm ci. v. 7. And indeed, it may exceed the abilities of the best and wisest of men, to guard, at all times, against all the arts of detraction.

2. Another thing that should induce us to this care, is, that otherwise we cannot approve ourselves to be truly religious. It is an observation of St. James, already taken notice of. If any "man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain." And the truth of that observation is confirmed by what has been said under the foregoing particular, of the importance of this matter. That man is not truly religious, whatever profession he may make, who talks without consideration, spreads stories to the disadvantage of others, founded only on surmise, or upon testimony that ought to be suspected: or affects to recommend the principles of religion, or of any science, who has neglected inquiry; or, who gives his judgment in affairs about which he is not well informed, and has taken no care to be so.

3. It ought to induce us to aim at the government of the tongue, that it is a great excellence. It is the doctrine of the text. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." It is a proof of much virtue, great discretion, a full command of the passions, and a prevailing regard to the good of others. Does a man bridle his tongue? Does nothing proceed out of his mouth to the detriment or offence of others? nothing but what tends to edification? Does he know when to speak, and when to be silent? "Is his speech always with grace, seasoned with salt?" Col. iv. 6. Are his words weighty though few? Are his discourses solid for the matter, and modest, and agreeable for the manner? Does he argue without positiveness, advise without assuming authority, and reprove without severity and harshness? Such an one is an excellent or perfect man. And it is a character which we may desire to attain to.

III. Which brings me to the third and last thing that was proposed, to lay down some rules and directions, which may assist us in governing the tongue, and curing the faults of it.

1. Let us cherish the principle of the fear of God in our hearts. For that will deter from every kind of evil, and dispose to good words, as well as to good actions." "Come, ye children," says the Psalmist, "hearken unto me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile," Psalm xxxiv. 11—13.

2. Let us also cherish and cultivate the love of our neighbour. "For love," as the apostle says, "is the fulfilling of the law," Rom. xiii. 10. If we love our neighbour as ourselves, we shall be concerned for his credit, as well as for our own: and not willingly injure him by words, any more than by actions.

3. Let us call to mind former offences and transgressions of this kind, which we have been convinced of, and have been sorry for. This may be of great use for time to come. It will secure our guard, and render it more effectual.

4. If we are acquainted with any excellent masters in this art, who are great examples of this virtue, we should diligently observe them for our imitation. If we know of any, who do not readily receive evil reports, who rarely speak to the disadvantage of any, who never aggravate the real faults of men, who are willing to applaud commendable actions, and to excuse imprudencies, and lesser faults: whose discourses are useful and entertaining: in whose mouth is the law of kindness, and whose "wisdom" is accompanied with "meekness," James iii. 13. they are worthy of our attentive view and observation.

5. Let us endeavour to mortify pride, envy, and inordinate self-love; and cultivate that

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wisdom, which is "pure, peaceable," ver. 17, 18, unbiassed, disinterested, and public spirited. Then we are likely to attain to this perfection, and not offend in word.

6. Let us also endeavour to improve in the knowledge of the works of nature, and the word of God. If a man's mind be filled with a variety of valuable knowledge, he will be under little temptation to divert into the topics of detraction and scandal, for the sake of shining in company.

7. Let us often recollect some of the directions which the scripture affords upon this point: "Speak evil of no man," Tit. iii. 2. "Let every one be swift to hear, slow to speak," James i. 19. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren," ch. iv. 11.

But it is time to conclude, out of reverence to the rules that have been just laid down, some of them especially.

I add therefore but one word more, which is, that we should now make application, not to others, but to ourselves. And if we have this day seen any of our faults, and the causes of them, let us not be like a "man, who having beheld his face in a glass, goes away, and soon forgetteth what manner of man he was: but having looked into the perfect law of" virtue, "let us continue therein: not being forgetful hearers, but doers of the word: for such shall be blessed in their deed," James i. 23, 24.

SERMON XVIII.

THE BENEFIT OF FEARING ALWAYS.

Happy is the man that feareth always; but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief. Prov. xxviii. 14.

All know, that a large part of the book of Proverbs consists of sentences unconnected, or observations and maxims independent on each other. Where that is the case, little light is afforded by the coherence. Nevertheless I shall read the verse immediately preceding. And if any connection was intended, possibly we may perceive it, at least hereafter, when we have considered the meaning of the words of this text.

Ver. 13 and 14. "He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy. Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief."

In discoursing on this text

I. I shall describe the fear here recommended.

II. I would shew the happiness of him who feareth always.

III. I shall endeavour to shew how this fear conduces to a man's happiness.

IV. After which I intend to mention some remarks and observations upon this subject, and conclude.

I. In the first place I should describe the fear here recommended; or shew what is meant by fearing always.

There is a good counsel of Solomon in the twenty-third chapter of this book: "Let not thy heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long," Prov. xxiii. 17. This is our duty and interest. Whatever advantages some may gain by unrighteousness, we should never be thereby induced to imitate their ways: but should still persevere in the service of God, and the way of virtue, which in time will be rewarded.

But it does not appear very likely, that this is what is here particularly intended by the wise man. The fear here spoken of, seems to be apprehensiveness, diffidence, with the fruits thereof, care, caution, and circumspection: as opposite to security, inconsideration, confidence and presumption. In this text is meant a temper of mind, which is often recommended by the wise man in other words. "The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his goings," chap. xiv. 15. And, "keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the

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issues of life——Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy paths be established," chap. iv. 23, 25, 26.

This property of fearing always, may be expedient and useful in a variety of occasions: in the things of this present life, and in the great concerns of our salvation.

It would undoubtedly be of bad consequence with regard to the affairs and business of this world, for men to be void of thought and consideration: to presume upon success, and depend upon good treatment, and honest dealings from all men; and rely upon the kind and faithful assistances of friends and servants, and others with whom we may be concerned, without any previous trial or examination.

And it must be expedient and useful for men, to be so far apprehensive of dangers and accidents, so sensible of the changes and vicissitudes that attend all earthly things, and so far aware of the unskilfulness, unfaithfulness, art and subtilty of other men, as shall induce them to take care of their own affairs themselves, and use a prudent caution and circumspection.

A like temper may be very useful in the things of religion. And to this the words of Solomon may be applied, if they are not to be directly interpreted in this sense.

Indeed there is a fearfulness, and timorousness of mind, which religion condemns: which is mean and unreasonable, groundless and indiscreet: when we are too apprehensive of the evils and afflictions of this life, or fear men more than God. Then we are to be blamed; then we act indiscreetly: when for fear of the displeasure of men, and the small evils they can inflict upon us, we do that which will offend God, and expose us to the long and grievous pains and miseries of another state, with the loss of all that happiness which we might have secured by resolution and courage in the way of religion and virtue.

But there is a fear and apprehension, which may be very useful. It is a fear of offending God, and a diffidence of ourselves and our own strength. It is founded in a persuasion of the great importance of right behaviour in this world, and a sure knowledge of the consequences thereof, either happiness or misery in a future state. It is also owing to a consideration of the power of things sensible, good and evil, agreeable or disagreeable, to bias and influence the mind: and that, oftentimes on a sudden, and to a degree beyond most men's expectations; whereby many are diverted from right conduct, and act contrary to former convictions, and their best purposes and resolutions.

He who fears always is one who is never unmindful of what is the great design of life, and what will be the consequences of it. He is desirous of obtaining eternal salvation, even a better happiness than this present world affords any prospect of. And he dreads the being finally rejected of God, and excluded from his presence. And as the reason of things, and the express declarations of the word of God, assures us, that final happiness, or misery, depends upon men's behaviour here; he is desirous, that his behaviour may be such as shall be approved in the end by the impartial and equitable Sovereign and Judge of the world.

But he is aware that there is no small difficulty in executing this design. He therefore fears always. In every state and condition, whether prosperity or adversity, he knows there are snares and temptations. For which reason he is at no time secure; but has continually a kind of distrust of himself, and is apprehensive, lest the ease and pleasure of the one should make him forget God and another world: and lest some things in the other condition, of which the afflictions are various, and very moving, should induce him to cast off the fear of God, and say, religion is vain.

He has his fears and apprehensions, arising from solitude, and from company: when alone, and when in conversation. He is aware that there are some snares peculiar to retirement, others to business. Nor is there any age, or time of life, but has its temptations.

He is not without his fears, when he engages in the worship of God, lest his services should be defective and unacceptable; and lest through neglect, inattention, or prejudices, the opportunity afforded him should be unprofitable. And indeed, Solomon has a direction and caution to this purpose: "Keep thy foot, when thou goest to the house of God; and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools," Eccl. v. 1.

In undertakings for the honour of God, and the interests of religion among men, he is sometimes in doubt and suspense, whether his zeal, though well-meant, be right and just. And he admits a re-examination of his design, that he may act according to knowledge, and upon

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the grounds of a well informed judgment; lest what he does should in the issue be rather prejudicial, than advantageous to the good cause he would promote.

After worshipping God with sincerity and fervour, and partaking in those ordinances and privileges which God has ordained for our improvement, he does not trust to the strength he has thereby gained; but still allows of apprehensions, lest he should act contrary to what he has seen to be fit and right; or some way fail to execute the purposes and resolutions which he has made and renewed in the presence of God.

And as he was beforehand afraid that he should not approve himself as he ought, so likewise, when through care and attention, he has, as he hopes, performed agreeably to his aims and wishes, he is upon his guard, lest some improper opinion and self-sufficiency should arise in his mind, inconsistent with that humility which he would ever maintain.

Nor does the man who fears always presume after the greatest successes. And though he has proceeded for some time in a course of obedience to God's commandments, and temptations have not hitherto greatly prevailed against him, he studiously declines conceit and assurance. He is still ever apprehensive of some new and unlooked for danger; and doubts, whether some time lesser temptations may not prevail, after greater have been vanquished.

Like some general, who, the more victories he has gained, is the more cautious of engaging an enemy; lest the honour of former successes should be lost and forfeited by some unhappy disaster.

This is the man, who, in a religious sense,[a] feareth always.

And now we may just observe the connection, which some think there is between this and the preceding observation, though it is not very clear and certain. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy. Happy is the man that feareth always:" that is, if he would secure the mercy he has found, the advantage he has gained, it will be of use, to preserve a fear of offending, and to be cautious and circumspect in all his actions.

II. Which leads us to the second point, the happiness of this temper and disposition of mind. "Happy is the man that feareth always."

The happiness of such an one is this: he will not fall into mischief. He will exceed his own fears and apprehensions. He will behave better, and wiser, than he imagined. It is very probable, that this fear of offending will prevent a great deal of grief and vexation. And he will never know by experience, what that remorse and anguish of mind is, which is the fruit of great and repeated transgressions. His apprehensions of falling, and dread of guilt, with the consequences of it, will secure him from those great and dreadful evils.

Probably, the life of such an one will be even and uniform. It will consist of a regular course of religious devotion, public and private: and of a great number, and large variety of beneficial actions, and kind offices to others.

He will scarce be able to refrain himself from giving some hints and instructions that shall be useful to others. Especially, if he see any secure and presuming, he will warn them affectionately and earnestly. But being sensible of his own weakness, and ever apprehensive of acting, some time, amiss himself; his admonitions, and warnings, and reproofs, if they should be needful, will be tempered with mildness and gentleness.

It seems not unlikely, that this property, of fearing always, should produce an amiable character, which shall gain a man some good degree of esteem, and qualify him for more usefulness, than very eminent attainments could do without it. The modesty and meekness of his behaviour will not only cast some lustre upon himself, but likewise adorn religion, and give it an agreeable and lovely appearance.

[a] '3. Walk circumspectly at all times, and in all relations 'and circumstances of life——Let not success betray you into 'security. Perhaps you have not for some time been importuned by temptations, or you have overcome them, and 'made some good progress in religion. But do not therefore 'lay aside your vigilance, since there may happen such an 'alteration in your circumstances, or in your temper, that you 'may have as much occasion for it, as ever you had in your 'lives, if not more. "Blessed is the man that feareth always," Prov. xxviii. 14; who has ever upon his mind such 'an apprehension of the great evil of sin, and his liableness 'to it, while he is in the body, as to be continually watchful 'against it. By thus fearing always he will be able to rejoice 'always, both in the consciousness of his own integrity, and 'the hope of the heavenly reward.' Mr. H. Grove's second volume of Additional Sermons. Serm. xvii. p. 450.

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And though he never, whilst in the body, and in this state of trial, dares pass a definitive sentence in favour of himself, but refers that to the all-knowing Judge: yet it is likely, that continued innocence, and persevering integrity, will lay a foundation for growing joy, and solid satisfaction of mind, which will be preferable to all the advantages of this world.

Such is the happiness of this person, and of this temper of mind.

III. In the third place we are to observe, how this temper, of fearing always, contributes to a man's happiness.

And it is very easy for any one to perceive this. For such an one will be circumspect and watchful; which, certainly, must be a good mean of security. He that looks well to his going, who is thoughtful and considerate, will, in all probability, act more wisely and discreetly, than the rash and unthinking.

Moreover he will be serious and diligent in the use of all proper means of security and steadfastness. He will frequent the assemblies of divine worship, and will pray and hear, not only out of form and carelessly, but with attention, and with a view of gaining confirmation and establishment. He considers acts of worship as means of improvement, and preparatory for the duties of life. And hereby he gains strength for resisting of temptations, and grows ready to every good word and work.

Nor does he neglect private meditation; but often thinks of God and another world. He contemplates the works of God, and studies his word. He considers the perfection and extent of the divine law. He observes the reasonableness of every part of it, and fixes in his mind an abhorrence of all sin upon a reasonable foundation.

He frequently contemplates the glory set before the upright and persevering in the gospel of Christ; and thereby he is animated to duty, and set more and more at variance with every thing that might deprive him of so great a recompence.

He dreads the thought of being hardened in sin, and therefore cherishes tenderness of spirit.

He often reflects on his ways, and calls himself to an account for what he has done in public and private; and fails not to renew his repentance. If any thing unbecoming has escaped him, he does not palliate and justify it, or seek for excuses and apologies; but he condemns himself for it, and laments it. His humility is thereby increased, and his future circumspection is rendered more exact and vigilant.

Nor would he shun the advices and reproofs of others; but would gladly accept the reprehensions and admonitions of a knowing and faithful friend.

This course of thinking and acting cannot but be of advantage, and conduce to the happiness described under the foregoing particular.

IV. I am now to add some remarks and observations. They will be such as these.

1. The temper of mind, spoken of in this maxim of Solomon, and styled "fearing always," is frequently recommended to Christians in the New Testament.

Our Lord cherished it in his own disciples by exhortations and arguments. They were not so perfect after he had been long with them, but he set before them the duty of watching. It is one of those things which he inculcated upon them a little before he took his leave of them. "And what I say unto you, I say unto all: Watch," Mark xiii. 37. And, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," Matt. xxvi. 41. They had been too positive and presuming. He assures them that they had better be, with regard to themselves, more diffident and distrustful; that they might be more upon their guard, and more constant and earnest in prayer to God for his protection and help.

This fear of offending, this distrust of ourselves, this apprehensiveness of the power of temptations, is implied in that petition of the prayer which Christ taught his disciples: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

"Brethren," says St. Paul to the Galatians, "if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted," Gal. vi. 1; that is, mindful of thy own weakness, and that it is not impossible, but thou also mayest at some time, and some other way or other, be tempted with effect, so as to fall.

Among divers considerations, which the apostle Paul mentions to dissuade the Corinthians from too great intimacy with the idolatrous heathens, he inserts this also: "Wherefore let him that thinks he stands, take heed, lest he fall," 1 Cor. x. 12.

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And with great affection and earnestness he says to the Philippians: "Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling," Philip. ii. 12.

St. Peter exhorts those to whom he writes, "to pass the time of their sojourning here in fear." Again, "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," 1 Pet. i. 17; ch. v. 8.

And the apostle to the Hebrews: "Take heed, my brethren, lest there be any of you in an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin," Heb. iii. 12, 13.

2. We may observe in the Old and New Testament divers instances of this temper of fearing always, in the sense of a religious fear, as we have explained it: a fear of offending, through the power of external temptations, and the weakness and inconstancy of our minds.

Possibly somewhat of this temper is implied in that expression of Job," "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change be," Job xiv. 14.

For this reason it is, that good men in the Old Testament sometimes speak of their guarding the senses, the inlets of external temptations, or occasions of sin. Job says, "he had made a covenant with his eyes," xxxi. 1. And the Psalmist: "I am purposed, that my mouth shall not transgress," Ps. xvii. 3.

Joseph, as is well known, feared to trust too much to his own resolution; and therefore shunned the company of the seducer.

This fear is the ground and principle of divers prayers of pious men: as "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. So shall I be free from every great transgression," Ps. xix. 13. Again, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness. Turn away my eyes from beholding vanity. And quicken me in thy way," Ps. cxix. 36, 37. And, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips. Incline not my heart unto any evil thing," Ps. cxli. 3, 4; that is, let not my heart incline to any evil thing: let me not be prevailed upon by any temptations, to do that which is evil.

To this purpose is that request of Agur: "Two things have I desired of thee. Deny me them not, before I die. Remove far from me vanity and lies. Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with food convenient for me. Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say: Who is the Lord? and lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of the Lord my God in vain," Prov. xxx. 7—9.

This good man feared always. He was apprehensive, that he had not sufficient resolution and virtue to behave well either in great prosperity, or in extreme want and poverty.

And the condition he chooses, as most desirable, is that in which he thinks his virtue would be exposed to the smallest or the fewest hazards.

St. Paul, who recommended to others fear and caution, is an example of it himself. He even says: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached the gospel to others, I myself should be a cast-away," 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Nor can it be doubted, but St. Peter likewise observed the rules he gave. It evidently appears in the temper of his epistles.

Yea our Lord himself is, in some measure, an example here. For he was tried as we are. Indeed he resisted, and overcame always. But though he was completely innocent, he saw the force of worldly temptations, and provided for them.

Before he entered upon his important and difficult ministry, he was led of the spirit into the wilderness, and was tempted divers ways. And by meditations, in that solitude, upon the vanity and emptiness of this world, and all its glory, and by considering the greater glory set before him, he was prepared for the trials of a more public life. And as his last and great temptation drew near, we discern him to be mindful of it. Says he to the disciples: "The prince of this world cometh: but hath nothing in me," John xiv. 30. And he retired into a private place. And likewise charged three of his disciples to watch, whilst he went and prayed at a small distance from them.

3. Upon the whole therefore we need not be shy of admitting, and cherishing this temper, of fearing always, or a perpetual distrust of ourselves, during this state of trial.

This fear or diffidence has in it some uneasiness: but it will lay a foundation for great advantages.

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It is better to fear offending, than to sorrow for having offended.

The care of caution is not so troublesome, as the bitterness of late repentance.

Though he who fears always should at first be esteemed neither the greatest, nor the happiest of men, in the end he may be both. For "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall," Prov. xvi. 18. Again, "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility," chap. xvii. 12.

It is good counsel, more especially fit to be given to some: "Let not him that putteth on the harness boast himself, as he that putteth it off," 1 Kings xx. 11.

In this respect, as well as some others, the day of a man's death is better than the day of his birth, Ecc. vii. 1. It is a happy thing, to pass with safety through the temptations of this world. At setting out the trial is doubtful and hazardous. But if a man be faithful, and keep the way of the Lord to the end, the reward is sure, and no temptations shall any more annoy or terrify.

To a good man therefore it must be desirable, after difficult services, and a life of caution and circumspection, to be able to say, when the will of the Lord is: It is finished. There is now an end to the labours, the afflictions, the sorrows, the temptations of this life. But there remains a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to all those who have fought a good fight, and kept the faith: who in all difficult services, and hazardous seasons of this life, have been encouraged by the hope of his appearing to reward the well-doer.

And since God knows all our frame, it must be our wisdom to refer ourselves to him, as to all things concerning us in this world: desirous, that all things may work together for our good: and that nothing may be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus: and hoping, that neither the good nor the evil things of this life, shall destroy the principle of virtue begun in us; but rather refine, improve, and strengthen it, until it be perfected in glory.

SERMON XIX.

OUR SAVIOUR'S THIRST UPON THE CROSS CONSIDERED AND IMPROVED.

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith: I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar. And they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. John xix. 28, 29.

St. Paul in the epistle to the Ephesians, ch. iii. 18, speaks of the unmeasurable extent of the love of Christ. Which yet it is very desirable, and will be very profitable for us to understand. And though we are not able to comprehend it, it will be of advantage to think rightly and justly of it, and not to conceive of his sufferings, that great proof of his love, as designed to supply the want of righteousness in us, but to be a powerful argument and incentive to real, eminent, and persevering righteousness and holiness.

All the ends and uses of Christ's sufferings shew his love in submitting to the pain and shame of the cross. And the greatness and variety of those sufferings are an affecting thought and consideration.

The words of the text are near the conclusion of the history of our Lord's last sufferings. And in explaining and improving them, I am led to speak to these several particulars.

I. I would shew the nature, and the causes of our Lord's thirst upon the cross, which he declared aloud.

II. The treatment which he thereupon met with: "They filled a spunge with vinegar, and put it to his mouth."

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III. The meaning of that expression in this place: "That the scripture might be fulfilled."

IV. After which I shall mention some suitable remarks.

I. I shall endeavour to shew the nature, and the causes of our Lord's thirst upon the cross, which he declared aloud.

Doubtless it was real and vehement, and owing to what he had endured both in body and mind. The Lord Jesus had not, that we any where read, any sickness. And it is reasonable to suppose, that he never had any. For death, and consequently sickness, and diseases, the forerunners and ordinary occasions of death, are the fruit of sin: from which Jesus was quite free. St. Paul speaks of God's "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," Rom. viii. 3. He had true and real flesh. For he was born of a woman. But it was not "sinful flesh." It was only "the likeness of sinful flesh." For he was not conceived in the ordinary way, but by the Holy Ghost, or the immediate interposition of God. And he in all things did the will of the Father, and ever pleased him that sent him.

But though Jesus was liable to no disease, or sickness, he had the innocent infirmities of the human nature. He was "wearied" with journeying, and had hunger and thirst, John iv. 6. He needed the refreshments of meat, and drink, and sleep: as we plainly perceive from his history in the gospels. He was also grieved, and offended, and angry, though without sin or excess, at the miseries, the faults, and the follies of men, especially such as were very great and aggravated. And undoubtedly he felt the pain of those stripes, which without resistance he suffered to be inflicted upon him.

In the fourth chapter of St. John's Gospel is the relation of our Lord's passing from Jerusalem to Galilee, where he chiefly was. "And he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria. Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar——Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well. And it was the sixth hour." If our Lord, in travelling on foot, was wearied with the length of the journey, and the heat of the day: how much more must he have been discomposed by all that had passed to this time from the evening of the preceding day!

For, as we all know from the evangelical history, when he had eaten the paschal supper, and instituted a memorial of his own transactions among men on this earth, and especially of his then approaching death, he had a long, but most heavenly and affecting conversation with the disciples. After that, coming to the garden, whither he sometimes went for the sake of privacy, he separated himself from the rest of the disciples, and retired with three of them into a more private place, and withdrew a small distance from them also: where in a near view of his approaching sufferings, and a close meditation upon the affecting circumstances of them, and the greatness of the temptation, which he was entering into, and how severe a trial it would be to the constancy of his virtue, and considering also the difficulty and the importance of a steady and exemplary conduct, and the tremendous consequences of any the least failure on his part, and also discerning the heinous guilt of his accusers and enemies, whether Jews or others, and divers other amazing particulars of the expected scene of sufferings; he earnestly prayed, "that the cup might pass from him. And there appeared an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground," Luke xxii. 42—44.

Soon after which, he was apprehended, and carried to the house of Annas, then of Caiaphas the high priest. And having been examined, and ill-treated, he was confined until early in the morning, and was then had before Pilate, where the accusations were renewed against him. By Pilate's order he was once at least, if not twice, scourged. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it upon his head. Neither of which could be without some effusion of blood. The same would be in a great degree the effect of fastening him to the cross, by the hands, and the feet. In the suffering of which, and during the whole time of his hanging on the cross, he must have had in his perfect body, of the finest contexture, the most exquisite sense of pain. In consequence of these fatigues, and these sufferings, and this loss of blood, he would be parched as it were with a violent drought.

Another thing, contributing to the vehemence of his thirst, must have been the exercise of his mind. Unquestionably, during the whole space of this concluding scene of our Lord's life, which we have just now briefly surveyed, there was in his mind all the care and attention and circumspection which can be conceived. And it required the full exertion of all the powers of

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his spotless and perfect mind, to persevere in meekness and patience under the insulting speeches and other abusive treatment, which he met with; and in complete resignation to the will of God: and in benevolence toward those who so unrighteously persecuted him.

Such a conclusion of so holy, so useful, so glorious a life and ministry, as was that of the Lord Jesus, must have been the most affecting trial that ever befell any man. During the period of this trial, the whole frame, both of body and mind, was stretched to the utmost: and the thirst which our Lord now openly expressed, must have been a natural consequence of it. We may well suppose, it was indeed great and vehement: an uneasiness, which at this time almost swallowed up the pains of his pierced and wounded hands and feet.

When Pilate had pronounced sentence upon Jesus, and they were carrying him to the place of crucifixion, or when he was come thither, and before they nailed him to the cross, there was offered to him "wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not," Mark xv. 23. He refused to drink of it. That was an intoxicating potion, wine mingled with some rich ingredients, tending to stupify. And probably, was a kind provision, made by some inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem, of a generous and compassionate temper for all, or most of such as were there sentenced to die by crucifixion. But it was wisely and greatly refused by the Lord Jesus: that he might be a complete example of suffering virtue. Somewhat else was now reached up to him upon the cross, after he had said, "I thirst." Which is next to be considered by us.

II. The treatment which he thereupon met with.

"Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar. And they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth."

This particular is also related by two other Evangelists. But we do not in them readily discern the occasion of it. This having been observed by St. John when he wrote his gospel, he was induced to supply their omission, and therefore inserted what we have just now considered, our Lord's saying: "I thirst."

Let us compare the other Evangelists with him. Says St. Matthew: "And about the ninth hour," or three in the afternoon, "Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani, that is to say: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said: This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a spunge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink," Matt. xxvii. 46—48. And to the like purpose in Mark xv. 34—36. But here, in St. John, it is thus, "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith: I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar. And they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth." St. Matthew and St. Mark, as it seems, mention together two things, which were partly independent on each other: I mean our Lord's prayer: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and then the giving him the spunge with vinegar. But St. John thought proper to insert more particularly the occasion of their giving him that vinegar, which was his saying: "I thirst."

"Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar. And they filled a spunge with the vinegar, and put it upon hyssop," that is, a reed, or slender stalk of hyssop, which is said to grow much higher in those climates, than with us: "and put it to his mouth." It is likely, that this was a vessel of such liquor as the Roman soldiers, and meaner people, generally drank.

What was the design of the person or persons, who reached up the spunge filled with that liquor, may not be certain: whether it was in the way of insult, or only an indifferent action, performed without any bad or good view, or whether with a kind design of affording at least some small relief under a very uneasy thirst. But it must be reckoned a very great trial, on so pressing an occasion, to have no other refreshment offered, beside that of so ordinary a liquor, out of such a vessel, which having stood all the while open, must now, at the end of a public execution, have been very filthy, and offensive.

Though we had had only the accounts of the other Evangelists, where the reaching up the spunge with vinegar is mentioned, we could have been able to discern, that it was either a designed affront and indignity, or at the least, an affecting proof of the deplorable and disconsolate condition of the Lord Jesus at this time, with regard to all outward circumstances. But St. John's addition of the occasion in those words, "I thirst," does more distinctly represent to us a very great uneasiness endured by our Lord.

They who are well acquainted with the nature of the death of the cross, in use among the

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Romans, and attentively observe the history of our Lord's being brought to it, might possibly have inferred, that a very uneasy and violent thirst must have been one of the painful and afflictive circumstances of it. Nevertheless St. John's particular mention of it is worthy of consideration, and is suited to engage our attention.

III. We should now consider the meaning of those expressions of the Evangelist, "that the scripture might be fulfilled."

"After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst:" that is, Jesus knowing and considering in his own mind, that many things appointed by the Father to be done and suffered by him on this earth, for the good of men, and which had been beforehand prophesied of him, had now come to pass, said, "I thirst:" believing that would give occasion for the fulfilment of a particular prophecy concerning him.

By which we may perceive that the first words of the Evangelist, "knowing that all things were now accomplished," ought not to be strained. He does not intend to say that all things, without exception, were already accomplished: for many things remained to be accomplished concerning Jesus Christ, after his resurrection. The meaning therefore must be restrained to things relating to the Messiah, during his abode on this earth. Nor are they to be absolutely understood so far: for it still remained that he should die, according to the scriptures. And there was still one thing to be accomplished before his death, as the Evangelist himself says: "Jesus knowing that all things were accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst."

The meaning therefore is, that Jesus knowing, and observing in his own mind, that many prophecies had been accomplished in the course of his ministry, and that now he had endured a very great variety, and almost all kinds of insults and indignities, pains and sorrows, agreeably to what the scriptures had said concerning the suffering character of the Messiah: he was about to resign and give up his soul into the hand of God. But knowing also that there was one thing spoken of the Messiah in the scriptures, which was not yet fulfilled, he said, "I thirst."

There are two places in the Psalms which are thought to speak of this: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd: and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou hast brought me into the dust of death," Ps. xxii. 15. And, "They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink," Ps. lxix. 21. These scriptures were now fulfilled.

IV. I would now mention some remarks and observations suitable to this subject.

1. When we meditate upon the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, we ought ever to admire the wise design and great love of the Father, in appointing that the Christ, his beloved Son, most dear to him, so holy, so excellent, so distinguished by miraculous powers and gifts, should for the general good of mankind live in this world in mean circumstances, and submit to the rage and enmity of wicked and prejudiced men, in testimony to the great truths and principles of religion, which contain instructions for our present conduct, and the best encouragements of our hopes and expectations of future glory and happiness.

2. Those meditations may also justly serve to endear to us the Lord Jesus, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us to himself for "a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. Such was the ransom he laid down for us, even his own life, in a way most painful and dishonourable to himself in all its outward circumstances.

Without this, his preaching, and all the miracles of his ministry, would not have been sufficient to awaken, convince, and gain more than a small number of Jews and Gentiles, in that, and a few following ages, in some parts of the world only: whereas now, we also, once very far off from the kingdom of God, in a very late age of the world, are brought into the number of God's people, and made heirs of eternal life. We must therefore acknowledge that the cross of Christ is the "power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 24.

He might with less pains and expense to himself have set up a very extensive empire of a worldly nature, and fixed it upon foundations that should be durable. But that was not the design of his coming; which was, that he might set up a kingdom in the minds of men, and subdue them to willing obedience to the laws of right reason, and the will of God, that they might be partakers of future, endless happiness, and that they might be strengthened against all the temptations of their present condition.

When therefore we consider at any time, how just sentiments we have of God, and of the way of serving him, how high ideas we have of a life to come, and what expectations we have

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of such a happiness: provided we can also discern in ourselves any dispositions of true holiness, and some preparedness for a better life: let us give a tribute of praise and honour to the Lord Jesus for such advantages, and love him who has loved us, and given himself for us. And let us be careful not to do any thing unbecoming the character which we sustain, of being his disciples. That would be a very ungrateful and disagreeable return for his pure and disinterested love, who expects nothing more of us than that we should honour him by a right temper and conduct.

3. The particular of the text may induce us sometimes to survey with care and attention the circumstances of our Lord's last sufferings. We should then, very likely, observe divers things deserving admiration, and very proper for our establishment and comfort.

4. We cannot omit to observe at this time the composure of our Lord's mind, and the greatness of his behaviour in the most trying circumstances.

"Jesus knowing, that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith: I thirst." So writes St. John, who was at the foot of the cross, and was persuaded, that in what the Lord then said, he had a regard to the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah. Which shews great composure of mind under the most painful sufferings.

We also perceive the greatness of his behaviour. When the sponge dipped in vinegar was put to his mouth, he does not make any complaints, nor exclaim against so disagreeable treatment, nor bemoan his sad condition. Nor does the Evangelist enlarge upon it, having for wise reasons prescribed to himself great conciseness. Nevertheless these things may be well observed by us. The doing so, will help us to form a more just idea of the great example of resignation and patience, which our Lord has given.

5. Finally, we should, in imitation of Jesus, be willing to endure all things for the truth's sake, and for the good of our fellow-creatures, and fellow-christians.

I am sensible, that the actions and sufferings of Jesus Christ are sometimes misunderstood and misapplied. Some in the church of Rome especially, have weakly imitated this part of our Lord's sufferings. And because he said, "I thirst," that they might resemble him therein, they have practised abstinence, until they have been incapable of admitting any liquid. To such it might be justly said: "Who has required this at your hands?" Is. i. 12. This is not a service acceptable to God, who does not delight in the pain and distress of any of his creatures. Nor did Jesus seek these sufferings: though he meekly acquiesced in them.

Christ indeed has required his followers to "love one another, as he has loved them." Which is a very comprehensive command. And implies, that they should be willing to hazard, or even lay down their lives for one another, and for the general good, if there should be occasion. But not otherwise. For he recommended to his disciples discretion, (which he often practised himself) as well as innocence. And directed them to decline dangers, as far as they honourably could, and when persecuted in one city, to flee into another.

But though some have practised a vain imitation of Christ, his conduct is really exemplary and encouraging. We should resemble him in zeal for God, a love of truth, and of one another. Resolution and steadiness in such interests are very honourable and commendable. And if at any time, in the course of Divine Providence, we are made like unto Jesus in afflictions and sufferings, and are meek and composed, and courageous under them as he was, we shall also be like him in glory and happiness hereafter.

SERMON XX.

THE GREATNESS OF JESUS IN HIS LAST SUFFERINGS.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said: It is finished. And he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. John xix. 30.

St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of the offence which some took at the sufferings of Christ. The Jews required a sign, and the Greeks sought after wisdom: insomuch that the preaching of Christ crucified was "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks

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foolishness." Nevertheless to many, "both Jews and Greeks, Christ was the power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 18—24. For which reason, and because he had himself in particular experienced the benefit of that doctrine, he determined, when at Corinth, one of the politest cities of Greece, then esteemed the most polite and learned part of the world, "not to know, [or make manifest,] any thing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

The disciples of Jesus, who had so much reason, from the excellence of his words, and the wonders and condescensions of his life, to love and respect him, were offended in him, forsook him, and fled, when he entered into the thick cloud of affliction. But their eyes were afterwards enlightened, their understandings opened, and their hearts enlarged. And they were able and willing to recommend to all, a faith in Christ crucified and risen as perfectly reasonable, and highly beneficial and advantageous.

But it is not now my intention to insist on all the ends and uses of the death of Christ, nor on all the reasons for permitting it. It is chiefly in one particular light, that I would at present consider the sufferings of the Lord Jesus: to shew, in some measure, his greatness under them: how he maintained his dignity throughout this hour of affliction, and strange scene of abasement: and the fitness and propriety of all his words and actions, from his yielding up himself into the hands of his enemies to his expiring on the cross: how he joined majesty with meekness, and under the most injurious and provoking treatment, manifested great presence of thought, and perfect composure of mind.

For this end, I shall take notice of the main parts of the whole history of the last sufferings of Jesus, as recorded by the Evangelists. The discourse shall be divided into two sections. The first containing the particulars of our Lord's apprehension and prosecution, to the time of his condemnation by Pilate: the second, containing the several things following, till he expired on the cross.

Sect. I. 1. And in the first place, there is a circumstance fit to be observed by us, which greatly exalts the fortitude of Jesus: that he knew beforehand the death he was to endure, and all the painful concomitants of it, and yet he resigns himself to it, and prepares himself for it with cheerfulness.

This composure of mind at his entering into the amazing scene of his sorrows, and his foreknowledge of them, appear in those words spoken to the disciples, in his retirement, after the conclusion of the prayers, which he had there offered up. "Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them: Sleep on now, and take your rest. Behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going. Behold, he is at hand that does betray me," Matt. xxvi. 45, 46.

We may be persuaded, from the intimations which our Lord had given to many and upon divers occasions, in the course of his ministry, that he beforehand knew the painful and ignominious death which he was to undergo. Here, in these words, just read from St. Matthew, the like to which are in St. Mark's gospel, we perceive his distinct foresight of the beginning of his last sorrows, and at the same time how composed he was, Mark xiv. 41, 42.

The Evangelists usually content themselves with barely relating things as they happened, without any hint of special observation to engage the attention of readers: Nevertheless St. John has thought fit just to take notice of this foreknowledge of Christ. "Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come unto him, went forth, and said unto them: Whom seek ye?" John xviii. 4.

Our blessed Lord's distinct foresight of all the affecting sufferings which he was to endure, greatly illustrates the resolution and fortitude of his mind, and his affectionate concern for sinful men, in resigning himself to them with such readiness as he did; which appears in the words just read, and in other particulars to be farther taken notice of.

2. Our Lord's great mind appears in the manner in which he received Judas who came to betray him, and the officers who were sent to apprehend him.

"Judas, one of the twelve," as the Evangelist relates, "came, and with him a great multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders," Matt. xxvi. 47. "And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master: and kissed him," ver. 49. He comes, with the usual tokens of respect, after some time of absence. Thus he addresseth himself to Christ, when this very salutation had been agreed upon, as a mark, denoting him whom the officers were to seize and lay hold of. Whereupon Jesus said unto him: "Friend, wherefore art thou come?"

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ver. 50. So in Matthew. But in another gospel: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss!" Luke xxii. 48.

This was the beginning of these sorrows: and it was a very affecting case. To be betrayed by a disciple, in the eye of the world, would appear a prejudice to our Saviour's reputation, and an argument of some misconduct, or of some bad designs; that one of his disciples and intimate friends delivered him to his enemies. This was an affecting thing. It must be so to any man, who is virtuous and innocent, and has a sense of honour. In ordinary minds, even where there is true goodness, it would have had one or other of these effects: to sink the spirits in a great degree; or else provoke to ungovernable resentment and indignation, breaking out into passionate expressions; but the greatness of Jesus is conspicuous. He saw the falsehood of Judas, under the fair appearance of respect and affection. Yet he returns him a familiar salutation, and calls him friend. But at the same time he intimates his discernment of his treacherous purpose, and gives a piercing reproof of his baseness: "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss!"

Then turning himself to the officers who came with Judas, he says, "Whom seek ye? They answered him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he——As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward," or drew back, "and fell to the ground. Then asked he them again: Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you, that I am he," John xviii. 4—8.

Here, as every where, all along, we see proofs of great presence of mind and composure of thought. Jesus had retired into a private place; but it was not with a view of hiding himself from his enemies. He was innocent, and knew himself to be so, and shews his conscious integrity, by declaring himself to be the person whom they sought: which acknowledgment was delivered with such majesty, or accompanied with such power, that they fell to the ground as if struck with lightning. Then a second time he asks, "whom they sought," and told them again, he was the person: by all this shewing that he could not be apprehended, but with his own consent, and that he did now willingly yield himself up into their hands.

This ought to fill us with respect for the Lord Jesus, at once admiring his dignity, and his condescension.

And this shews, that if afterwards he does not deliver himself, or escape from his enemies, but submits to all the evils which they are disposed to inflict upon him, it is not because he is not able to save himself; but because he resigns himself to those sufferings, it being the will of God, for the good of men, that he should so acquiesce, and thereby afford an example of consummate patience, confirm his important doctrine; and draw men to him, and bring them to high degrees of virtue here, and of glory and happiness hereafter.

3. The next thing to be observed by us is the demand which he makes for the liberty of his disciples. As it follows in St. John's gospel: "Jesus answered: I have told you, that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake: Of them which thou gavest me I have lost none," John xviii. 8, 9.

This is another proof that the mind of the blessed Jesus was not discomposed by the indignities already offered to him, or the sufferings which he expected to befall him. He yields up himself, but secures his disciples, who were not yet qualified for great trials, and whose life was necessary for spreading his doctrine in the world, after he should rise again.

We here also evidently discern, not only the tender compassion and faithful care of the Lord Jesus for those whom he had called to follow him, and be with him, but also the overruling conduct of Divine Providence in this event, the death of the Messiah. It is indeed a surprising thing. But it is not without a divine permission. It was the interest of the enemies of Jesus, and his doctrine, to take off his disciples, his constant followers, together with him. And if he was judged to be criminal, they must be reckoned so likewise. But the high priests and rulers had not power so much as to apprehend and imprison one of them.

Christ having authoritatively and effectually demanded safety and liberty for his disciples, they soon after this withdrew, most of them, whilst one or two of them followed afar off to see the end.

4. The next thing, which immediately follows in St. John's gospel, is the resistance made by Peter. Which is in part related also by the other Evangelists, except that they have not mentioned that disciple by name.

Says St. John: "Then Simon Peter having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's

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servant, and cut off his right ear. Then said Jesus unto Peter: Put up thy sword into the sheath. The cup, which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" John xviii. 10, 11. We must take a part of this history as related by others. In Matthew: "Then said Jesus unto him: Put up again thy sword into its place. For all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou, that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Matt. xxvi. 52—54. In St. Luke: "And one of them," that is, of the disciples, "smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered, and said: Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him," Luke xxii. 51, 52. St. Mark: "And they laid their hands on him and took him. And one of them that stood by, drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear," Mark xiv. 46, 47.

Certainly Jesus appears great in this place. He had already done what might be sufficient to satisfy every one, that he was willing to submit to the trial that was coming upon him, how great soever it might prove, and whatever should be the issue of this attempt of his enemies upon his liberty. Nevertheless his faithful and affectionate disciples are still uneasy and perplexed to a great degree. And one of them makes resistance, takes the sword, and wounds one of the officers, who came to seize his Lord and Master. This was a testimony of sincere affection and zeal: and our Lord must have been sensibly touched with it. This was one of the bitter ingredients of his cup: the sorrow and anguish of mind which his disgraces and other sufferings caused in his disciples. But observe the alacrity with which he takes it, and the superior regard which he has for the will of God above all private interests of his disciples, whom he tenderly loved, as well as above his own. "The cup, which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it? Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he would give me more than twelve legions of angels?" These things more especially concerning the disciples. However, the officers likewise, and all present, were hereby instructed.

Let us then take notice of this, as another proof of the fortitude and the meekness of Jesus, and his complete resignation to the whole will, and all the appointments of the Father.

Christ did not suffer as he did, because he could not save himself: but for great and valuable ends, the glory of God, the interests of truth, and the welfare of men, he submitted and acquiesced.

5. What follows is the actual apprehending of Jesus.

In St. John: "Then the band, and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him," John xviii. 12. In St. Matthew: "In that same hour said Jesus unto the multitudes: Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him and fled," Matt. xxvi. 55, 56. Compare Mark xiv. 48—50. In St. Luke thus: "Then Jesus said unto the chief priests and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him: Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness," Luke xxii. 52, 53.

In this occurrence, I apprehend, we discern the sensibility of our Lord's frame, and that he was affected with this great indignity: that he was sought for, and taken up in the night as a thief, or ordinary offender against the peace of society. But though he is affected, he does not faint, or sink under the vile abuse. He teaches the men present the iniquity of their proceeding, and of the designs of those from whom they came. He also satisfies and composes himself, and likewise obviates their triumph on account of their seeming success in getting him into their hands, saying: "But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." 'You could not seize me 'before: nor until I had fully taught the will of God, and finished the work, which the Father 'had given me to do. But now is come the time when Divine Providence, for wise reasons and 'great ends and purposes, permits your wicked counsels to take place. And though the circum-'stances in which I now am, are indeed, as to outward appearance, dishonourable and disgrace-'ful, I acquiesce, and yield myself to you, and even submit to be bound: though you have no 'reason to think that I should attempt to make an escape. It is not your power to which I am 'subject, and by which I am overcome. But it is the will of God, to which I submit, and 'resign myself.'

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It is not easy to proceed, without observing the sad instances which appear here of the hardness of men's hearts, and of an obstinate disposition of mind.

One instance is that of Judas, whom Jesus had kindly and solemnly warned more than once, intimating beforehand, that "one of the twelve would betray him," and saying: "Woe be to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed." Yet this wicked disciple proceeded to execute the base purpose which he had conceived in his mind.

Another is that of the Jewish servants and officers: who, notwithstanding the knowledge which they must before have had of the character of Jesus, and notwithstanding what they now heard from him, and saw in him, performed the orders which they had received, and laid hands on Jesus, and bound him, to carry him to the priests and elders. Some such officers, having formerly received a like order, returned without obeying it: and when asked: "Why they had not brought him," answered: "Never man spake like this man," John vii. 46. So might these have alleged this reason for not bringing him: "Never was there any man so great and excellent as he."

May we be always preserved from such hardness of heart. Let us not neglect the remonstrances of conscience. Let us submit to admonition. If we enter into wrong designs, let us not persist in them. Let us quit and forsake them when we find that they are disapproved of God, and contrary to reason.*

They who had apprehended our Lord, first had him to Annas, who sent him to Caiaphas, at that time high priest. Which is a particular related by St. John only: "Then the band and captain and officers took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first. For he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year——Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest," John xviii. 12, 13, 24.

6. What we are therefore next to take notice of in the sixth place, is, what first happened at the house of Caiaphas the high priest. "The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him: I spake openly to the world, I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort. And in secret have I said nothing," John xviii. 19, 20. That is, 'I have taken all proper opportunities of speaking in 'the most public places. And if at any time I have taught my disciples privately, there is 'no reason to think, that any thing was then said by me different from the tenour of the doc-'trine taught by me in places of the most general resort.' "Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them. Behold, they know what I have said," ver. 21.

Every one must be sensible of the propriety of this answer. It was not a time for our Lord to rehearse the doctrine which he had taught, or to apologize for it, and demonstrate the innocence of it, or that it had no bad tendency. The high priest's question was improper and unseasonable. And our Lord justly exposed it by his answer.

Nevertheless, as it follows in St. John: "When he had thus spoken, one of the officers, who stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying: Answerest thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him: If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" ver. 22, 23. Which certainly shews full composure of mind, and great meekness. He does not exert his power for punishing so heinous an indignity; but calmly shews the iniquity of the treatment just given him: his answer to the high priest having been very just, implying the consciousness of his innocence, and the impropriety of the question put by the high priest to a person brought before him as upon trial.

7. In the next place, seventhly, we are to observe the farther proceedings before the high priest, which are rather more regular, though altogether unrighteous, they by whom they endeavoured to convict Jesus being false witnesses. "Now the chief priests and elders and all the council sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death; but found none. Yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses, and said: This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto him: Answerest thou nothing? What is it that these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace," Matt. xxvi. 59—62. St. Mark also relating this transaction, says, "But he held his peace, and answered nothing," ch. xiv. 60.

* If any should find the first part of this sermon too long to be read at once, here may be a proper pause.

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The silence of our Lord upon this occasion deserves notice, as highly becoming a person of a distinguished character, and known innocence: especially when men, sitting in judgment as magistrates, shew themselves destitute of a regard to justice and equity, and betray a malicious design to put a man to death, though they have no evidence against him, and the witnesses that appear, at their procurement, are inconsistent, and do not agree together. We shall have occasion, as we proceed, to observe more than once this proof of our Lord's greatness: I mean his silence.

However it follows in St. Matthew: "And the high priest answered and said unto him: I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God? Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said:" Matt. xxvi. 63—66; that is, it is as thou hast said. You have rightly expressed the character which I claim. "Nevertheless I say unto you:" notwithstanding the meanness of my present appearance: and though at this present time I say and do nothing beside what has been manifested in my past life for justifying this claim and character, I do assure you: "Hereafter ye will see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and said: He has spoken blasphemy. What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered, and said: He is guilty of death;" or deserves to be put to death.

Here again we see our Lord's excellent behaviour. Though he had been silent hitherto, yet being adjured in the name of God, he answers readily and distinctly; even though he could not but very well know the perverse use which the council would make of it, and that they would charge him with blasphemy, as if the claim was without ground.

Here therefore we perceive the truth, and the courage of our Lord. In the time of his public preaching he proved himself to be the Christ, or the Messiah, by his discourses and his works. But he seldom said expressly, that he was the Messiah, for avoiding ostentation, and for preventing the abuse, which some might have made of such a declaration, and the bad consequences that might have ensued, considering how many supposed a temporal power and kingdom to be annexed to that character. But now, when the declaration could be attended with no bad consequences to others, he freely makes it: though it would soon expose him to a charge of blasphemy, which would be deemed worthy of death.

In this profession, now made, there is much majesty, unspeakable goodness, and admirable wisdom and discretion. The majesty is evident. There is also goodness, in foretelling the glory and power to which he should be advanced, and in which he should come to punish the determined and implacable enemies of truth and virtue. It was, I say, great goodness to warn and admonish those who had given such proofs of hardness of heart, of the guilt they would contract, and the miseries they would be in danger of, if they should proceed to condemn him. And the discretion is admirable, in delivering that kind and compassionate instruction and warning, without any diminution of his greatness.

8. Eighthly, the next thing which offers itself to us, is the behaviour of Peter, whose repeated denial happened at this season, whilst our Saviour was in the house of Caiaphas.

There is no need that I should insert here any of the accounts of this matter, in any of the Evangelists; it being well known to every one, that this disciple, partly out of curiosity, partly out of esteem and affection for Jesus, had followed him into the high priest's hall. At this time, when Jesus was before the high priest and elders and the council of the Jews, Peter at some small distance, in the lower part of the hall, as a stranger, and among persons chiefly of lower rank, being challenged as a disciple of Jesus, thrice denied it, or that he had any knowledge of him, and endeavoured to corroborate what he said with oaths and imprecations, the more effectually to secure his own safety.

This must have been very affecting to our Lord: that a disciple of his, and one of the chief, and most favoured, should act so unsuitably to his obligations and solemn professions. But behold the complete composure of our Lord's mind. He is not so offended at the bad conduct of his disciple, nor so concerned about the malicious and artful proceedings of the council, before whom he stood, but he takes care of Peter: "He turned and looked upon Peter," Luke xxii. 61, with earnestness and tenderness. And by that piercing and gracious look, he recovered this fallen disciple, who then, not being longer able to bear company, and wanting a

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place of retirement to bemoan his own falsehood and inconstancy, "went out and wept bitterly," ver. 62, and Matt. xxvi. 75.

9. In the ninth place we will observe the history of our Lord's first appearance before Pilate. "When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor," Matt. xxvii. 1, 2. And Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him: Thou sayest," ver. 11; that is, it is as thou sayest. You have rightly expressed my character. I acknowledge myself to be the king of the Jews. Thus our Lord here professes again plainly the same thing which he had said before the Jewish council: whatever bad use might be made of it, to his detriment.

St. Matthew's account is just, but it is very concise and summary. Therefore, though we ought to study brevity, I think we should take in also a part of St. John's account, which is more full. "Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thy own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done? Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered up to the Jews. But now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him: Art thou a king then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest, that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this end came I into this world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice."

By which we perceive, that our Lord was not unwilling to speak when there was occasion: and that, being fully composed in his mind, when he speaks his words are wise and proper. He not only undauntedly acknowledges his character of the Messiah, but Pilate being a stranger, he condescends also to give him some information concerning the nature of his kingdom, and of the title which he assumed, of "the king of the Jews:" letting him know, that it was not a worldly kingdom, supported by sanctions of worldly rewards and punishments, human force and authority, but is a kingdom of truth: and that his design was to bear testimony to truth, especially religious truth; the interest of which is supported and carried on by reason and argument only, and by appeals to the understanding, judgment and conscience of men. Such a king I am: and every one who is a lover of truth, will receive me for his Lord and Master, and become my disciple and follower. Thus, as St. Paul says, "Jesus Christ before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession," 1 Tim. vi. 13.

It is added in St. Matthew, in the place before quoted: "And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him: Hearest thou not, how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him never a word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly," Matt. xxvii. 12—14. Our Lord having said what was sufficient to give Pilate satisfaction concerning the nature of his claim, and the innocence of his behaviour, if Pilate was impartial and equitable, as related in St. John, he refused to plead any longer. That would have looked like disputing and arguing; which was below his dignity, and unsuitable to his present circumstances.

10. There is another thing, in the tenth place, mentioned by St. Luke, which we cannot overlook, the appearance of Jesus before Herod the Tetrarch. "Then said Pilate unto the chief priests, and to the people: I find no fault in this man. And they were the more fierce, saying, he stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee unto this place. As soon as he knew that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him, and he hoped to have seen a miracle done by him. Then he questioned him in many words: but he answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him: and Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate," Luke xxiii. 4—11.

Here we see our Lord's continued meekness and patience, in submitting to be thus sent from one to another, and enduring all manner of scoffs and insults without complaint. We likewise see his true greatness. He works not any miracle before Herod, either of salvation or

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destruction; though this last might have been justly done. He says not a word by way of apology for himself, his innocence being conspicuous, and all the accusations brought against him false and groundless. Our Lord's behaviour is admirable. If he had not been a person of consummate wisdom, and had not now had the full command of himself, he might have been induced to exert his power in performing some work of an extraordinary kind, or to say something strongly in his own behalf: but his silence and inaction are more becoming. He behaves as one ought to do, who had wrought such miracles as he had done, many of them in the territories of Herod, who might have informed himself concerning them if he had pleased: and as became him in the presence of that man who had unrighteously put John the Baptist to death, and still lived in the sins for which he had been reproved by him, and now added the prodigious sin and folly of insulting, and contemptuously ridiculing and mocking a man, concerning whom many great things had been reported to him, and in whom no fault had been found, after a very public life, into which the strictest inquiries had been made.

11. Now we are led to take notice of the demand made by the people, at the instigation of the rulers, that Barabbas might be delivered to them.

For Pilate was convinced, that in this cause the chief men of the Jews had been actuated by envy: therefore he put the people in mind of a custom they had for him to release to them a prisoner at that feast. And the more to incline them in favour of Jesus, he proposed him to them, together with another, who was infamous, or as St. Matthew styles him, a "notable prisoner," Matt. xxvii. 16, or notorious transgressor, whose crimes are more particularly put down in the other Evangelists. Mark xv. 7; Luke xxiii. 25; John xviii. 40. The governor answered, and said unto them, Whether of the two will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate said unto them, What then shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ? They all said unto him: Let him be crucified," ver. 21, 22.

How provoking is this! Yet not one word proceeds from Jesus. He might indeed justly have spoken out, and addressed himself to the people, and all present, saying, 'O shameful indignity! O unexampled preference! Do you not know the demerits of the prisoner, whom you desire to have released unto you? And do you demand that I should be put to death? Have you never been present at my discourses in the temple or the synagogues? Have you never seen or heard of any of the mighty works done by me, equalling or exceeding those done by any of your prophets, Moses himself not excepted? Have you forgot your own loud and cheerful acclamations, and the solemn and willing pomp with which you lately conducted me into this city, saying, "Hosannah to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"' These and other things might have been justly and properly said. But our Lord's silence is greater than all words; more significant and moving than the most pathetic speech that could be made.

12. The last thing to be mentioned here is the sentence pronounced by Pilate.

Says St. John: "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat——Then delivered he him therefore to them to be crucified," John xix. 13, 16. To the like purpose in St. Matthew, chap. xxii. 26; and St. Mark, chap. xv. 15. Or, as in St. Luke, chap. xxiii. 24, 25. "And Pilate gave sentence, that it should be as they required—and he delivered Jesus to their will."

That is the sentence. But it may be perceived, that for the sake of brevity, I pass over divers things, which happened at this time: the scourging ordered by Pilate, the derisions and insults of the soldiers, "who platted a crown of thorns, and put it upon his head, and put on him a purple robe, and said: Hail, king of the Jews. And they smote him on the head with a reed, and spat upon him, and bowing their knees, worshipped him:" that is, derided him with many tokens of mock-honour and respect.

It was amazing meekness in our Lord, to bear all this treatment without punishing it: true greatness to make no remonstrances against such crying abuse. This was not a time for him to use earnest expostulations or loud complaints. His [a] former life testified his innocence, and condemned all accusations brought against him, and covered with shame the indignities offered

[a] Ὁ μεν σωτηρ και κυριος ημων Ιησους Χριστος, ψευδομαρτυρουμενος μεν, εσιωπα· κατηγορουμενος δε, ουδεν απεκρινατο· πειθομενος, παντα τον βιον εαυτου, και τας εν ιουδαιοις πραξεις, κρειττους γεγονεναι φωνης ελεγχουσης την ψευδομαρτυριαν, και λεξεων απολογουμενων προς τας κατηγοριας. Orig. Contr. Cels. l. i. in.

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to him, and those by whom they were offered. He therefore was silent, and referred himself to the judgment of God: as St. Peter says admirably: "Who when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously," 1 Pet. ii. 23.

Sect. II. Having already observed the account of our Lord's being apprehended, with the circumstances of it, and many marks of meekness and greatness therein, and the history of our Lord's being carried to Annas and Caiaphas, and then to Pontius Pilate the Roman governor in Judea, with the indignities there cast upon him, and his admirable behaviour upon every occasion, till Pilate unwillingly pronounced sentence that he might be crucified:

I now proceed to the remaining part of this affecting history, written indeed, as every other part of the gospels is, without ornaments and embellishments, and without any designed artifice to raise the passions, being throughout only plain relations of matters of fact, with their several circumstances. Which, however, being for that very reason the more apparently credible, are moving in a great degree, and afford ground for many just reflections and observations, and secure the truest respect and esteem for him whose history is here related.

1. Our Lord is now carried away to the common place of execution, without the city of Jerusalem, bearing his own cross according to the custom of the Romans, till he having been much fatigued by the sufferings already endured, they compelled another to carry it, or help in bearing it, holding up the hinder part of it.

Here offers itself to our consideration the answer which our Lord made to those who lamented and bewailed him. Says St. Luke: "And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon a Cyrenian coming out of the country. And on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed him, and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in which they shall say: Blessed are the barren, and [or even] the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall on us: and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do such things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Luke xxiii. 26. That is, bewail not me, but rather think of the dreadful calamities which are coming upon this city and people, for rejecting my mission, and putting me to death, and for the other sins which they will be guilty of: even as I myself, beholding this city some while ago, wept over it in the prospect of the heavy judgments impending over it.

This is a demonstration of a most excellent temper. At the very time that our Lord is ill-treated in the most unrighteous manner, and has a near prospect of the pain and shame of the cross, he breaks out into compassionate expressions for his enemies, and appears to be touched with a concern for those calamities which were coming upon the most hardened sinners. His concern for them seems to make him forget and overlook his own afflictions. That is the first thing.

2. We are led in the next place to observe our Lord's refusing a stupifying potion of liquor offered to him, mentioned Mark xv. 22, 23. "And they bring him to the place called Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, the place of a skull. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh. But he received it not." It is probable, that this was a draught of generous wine, improved likewise with spices, and made intoxicating and stupifying in a great degree. It was either a potion ordinarily allowed to malefactors condemned to the cross: or else was prepared by some who had an affection for our Lord, to abate the pain of the piercing and lingering sufferings which he was going to endure. "But he did not receive it:" [a] being determined to give a complete example of patience, by enduring all the pain of the death assigned him without any abatement.

There is no need to add remarks on this particular. Every one sees the composure of our Lord's mind, and the propriety of his action. To have received it might have been no disparagement to a person of an ordinary character. But it was very becoming Jesus to reject it.

[a] Noluit autem imbibere Christus, quia, ut diximus, menti exsternendæ adhibebatur. In cruce autem pendens postea, quia sitiebat, ελαβεν ὀξος, 'accepit acetum,' id est, imbibit. John xix. 30. Grot. ad Matt. xxvii. 34.

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And yet, whilst he does what is a very great instance of resolution and fortitude, the principle, from which it proceeded, is not particularly mentioned. "He received it not." That is all which is here said. Nothing is added to enhance such generous self-denial.

3. We now observe our Lord's prayer for his enemies: which follows next after the words before cited from St. Luke, ch. xxiii. 32—34. "And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus: Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do."

It is plain, that it was now the beginning of the crucifixion. I think it likely that this compassionate prayer was offered up by our Lord at the very time that they were nailing his hands and feet to the wood of the cross, or else, immediately afterwards, as soon as the cross was set up: at which time the pain felt by him must have been the most acute that can be conceived.

In this prayer are divers things remarkable, proofs of an heroic mind.

Here appear, at this time, under the heaviest load of ignominy, and the most painful sufferings, a calm and composed frame, acquiescence in the disposal of Providence, and a full persuasion of the favour and good will of God.

Toward men here appear meekness and benevolence. The mind is not filled, as it justly might, with bitter resentment and indignation, manifesting itself in loud complaints of injustice, appeals to heaven for the innocence of the sufferer, and earnest expostulations of immediate and exemplary vengeance upon unrighteous enemies.

Instead thereof, our Lord, sensible indeed of their guilt, and conscious of his own innocence, and persuaded that this treatment of him was offensive to the supreme Judge, intercedes in behalf of those who were the instruments of such pain: desiring that they might be forgiven, and alleging the only thing that could alleviate their guilt or punishment: "they know not what they do." This may relate more especially to the heathen soldiers, the immediate instruments. But it will comprehend, and undoubtedly was designed in favour of the Jews also, or many of them, whose prejudices prevailed against evidence. So St. Paul speaks of the Jews at Jerusalem, Acts xiii. 27. "——because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets——they have fulfilled them in condemning him." And 1 Cor. ii. 2. "Had they known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." The like is said by St. Peter, Acts iii. 17. "And now, brethren, I know, that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."

That is the third thing, our Lord's compassionate prayer for his enemies. And we should remember the time when it was offered: not before his passion nor after it, when the pain and anguish of his sufferings were over, and he was raised from the dead: but at the time when pain and shame, and every evil thing that can be thought of, concurred to excite displeasure and resentment.

4. Another thing, which cannot be unobserved by us, is our Lord's amazing patience, and wonderful silence, under all the reproaches cast upon him at this time. So it follows in St. Luke, soon after the forementioned prayer, ch. xxiii. 35, 36. "And the people stood beholding, and the rulers also with them derided him, saying: He saved others. Let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers also mocked him, saying: If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself." Or as in St. Matthew, ch. xxvii. 39, 42, 43. "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads——Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said: He saved others, himself he cannot save. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God. Let him deliver him if he will have him."

These scoffs must have been very trying. Nevertheless our Lord bears them meekly and patiently. He does not come down from the cross as he might: nor strike these blasphemers dead as he could. He does not make any reply as he might have done, to those especially who stood near the cross: reminding them of the innocence of his life, the greatness of his works, or any other demonstrative proofs of the special regard and approbation of the Father. Nor does he remind them of his expected resurrection, which he had foretold. But he silently bears all the reproaches which the present circumstance seemed to justify. This silence is greater than all words. It was, as he said at the beginning of this strange scene, "their hour, and the power of darkness." And he had "committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." He now therefore meekly endures all, which the malice of evil and pre-

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judiced men prompted them to do to him, and patiently waited for the full vindication which in due time would be given of his innocence and great character.[a]

5. Another mark of greatness is the regard shewn by our Lord to the penitent thief. For, as St. Luke proceeds to relate in the forecited twenty-third chapter of his gospel: "And one of the malefactors railed at him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." But he was rebuked for it by the other, who also said unto Jesus: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus saith unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

He bears all the reproaches of his enemies without saying a word. But he hears and answers the petition of a humbled, penitent sufferer. This request of the malefactor is a proof that he had seen something very great and extraordinary in the person and behaviour of Jesus under his sufferings. If before he was set upon the cross, he had some knowledge of Jesus, and a faith in him, as the Christ (which may be reckoned probable) yet, undoubtedly, his faith was increased and confirmed by the excellent behaviour of Jesus, during this afflictive and melancholy season. And our Lord's answer sets before us another and manifest instance of the excellent frame of his mind. "Verily, I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Which shews that his spirit was not broken, sunk down, and dejected by the continued scene of various afflictions of the most trying nature. He is still composed. He is persuaded of the happy issue of all. He knows his own innocence, and eyes the reward set before him. He receives the profession made of a belief in his character and kingdom. He shews his approbation of it, and his satisfaction therein: and with full authority he promises a place that very day in paradise. How great is Jesus here! He triumphs every where: and how glorious is this triumph! On the cross, during the very time of his most ignominious sufferings, he carries on, and accomplishes his great design of converting and saving sinners. Truly the Pharisees had still cause of envy and indignation. They were before offended, because sinners resorted to him to hear him, and he taught them: or because he received them, and comforted them with assurance of pardon, when they gave tokens of compunction and repentance. They make him suffer with sinners, yea with malefactors. And one of them openly professes faith in him, and humbly seeks to him. And Jesus receives him, and promises him immediate admission, together with himself, into paradise.

In a word, Jesus is the same every where. And on the cross he receives penitent sinners with like readiness and satisfaction, as when sitting at table in the house of a Pharisee. Such uniformity is there in his life and in his death!

6. Another thing very observable is the regard that Jesus shewed to his mother Mary. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When therefore Jesus saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother: Woman, behold thy son. Then saith he to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home," John xix. 25—27.

Certainly never was there a greater instance of full composure under sufferings than this. On the cross our Lord disposes his only worldly concern, and recommends his mother to the person fittest to take care of her, to comfort her, and secure her from contempt and injury, so long as she should survive himself on this earth.

It is much to the honour of Mary, that we find her present at this mournful scene; as it is to the honour of our Lord that he took such notice of her.

7. I add but one thing more, the conclusion of these sufferings, or the greatness and majesty of our Lord in his death; though it will contain more particulars than one.

Matt. xxvii. 46—50. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani! that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" St. John, omitting that particular, says, "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished: [that is, knowing that all things were now near a full and entire accomplishment,] saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When therefore Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished. And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost," ch. xix. 28—30.

[a] Our Saviour's meekness under sufferings is prophetically represented in a beautiful similitude: "and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," Is. liii. 7.

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I once intended, after going through the several tokens of greatness and majesty appearing in our Lord's last sufferings, to consider those words as an objection, which were just now recited from St. Matthew, where our Lord says, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But I now rather think it best to clear them as we go along. The same expressions are also in St. Mark: "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" ch. xv. 34.

Some may apprehend that these words import uneasiness and impatience of mind. But when duly attended to, I think there will be no foundation for that supposition. The address, "My God, my God," shews a claim of interest, and a persuasion of acceptance. And the whole, if rightly understood, will be perceived to be a request to be now released from these troubles, and presented with a full belief that he should now be released, all things concerning the sufferings of the Messiah being quite, or well nigh, accomplished.

The words are at the beginning of the twenty-second psalm, entitled, A psalm of David. And in them our Lord chose to offer up his petition at this time: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It follows: "Why art thou so far from helping me?"

Our Lord's expiring is thus related by St. John in the text. "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished. And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." In St. Luke xxiii. 46. "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. And having said thus, he gave up the ghost." Joining together those two evangelists, the history, I think, is thus: having received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished." And soon after that he said: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And then declining his head, he gave up the ghost.

Thus died Jesus, after having endured all manner of indignities, as well as the most exquisite pain, with perfect composure of mind, and full confidence in God. Having offered up an earnest request to be released and dismissed, he says, "I thirst." And having then received one indignity more of a very affecting nature, he cried out again: "It is finished." 'Every 'humbling circumstance concerning the life of the Messiah, that had been foretold, is accom-'plished. And I have now done and suffered all that my office required.' And knowing, that the prayer before offered was acceptable to the Father, he bowed his head, and willingly resigned his spirit, in hope of a resurrection to life, and the glorious exaltation that had been set before him.

Herein must be allowed to be every thing great and excellent: meekness toward men, peace of mind within, resignation to the will of God, confidence of his approbation, hope of after-glory and honour.

That there was somewhat very great and admirable in the concluding circumstances of this amazing scene, is evident from the confession of the centurion, who presided at the crucifixion. "And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said: Truly, this man was the Son of God," Mark xv. 39. St. Luke's words are, "Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying: Certainly this was a righteous man. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote their breasts, and returned," ch. xxiii. 46, 47.

Let me add a few thoughts by way of reflection.

1. From the view which we have now taken of our Lord's sufferings, we may perceive it was with good reason he prayed, that "this cup might pass from him," if it were pleasing to the Father: and that, when he attentively considered those sufferings which were near at hand, he was amazed, and sorrowful unto death, or was under great concern, accompanied with an uncommon sweat, Luke xxii. 39—41.

For it was a cup, filled with bitter ingredients, the pain, and the shame of the cross: reproaches and scoffs, injurious to his high character, and the belief of his mission. Beside all the sufferings to be inflicted upon himself, he felt, undoubtedly, in that preparatory meditation, the grief, the doubts, the fears, and even the guilt, and miseries, which his ignominious sufferings would occasion in others. If the Father did not see fit to interpose for preventing the sufferings of his Son, he [a] should be betrayed by one of his own disciples, who thereby would incur a most

[a] Contristabatur autem non timore patiendi, qui ad hoc venerat, ut pateretur, et Petrum timiditatis arguerat: sed propter infelicissimum Judam, et scandalum omnium Apostolorum, et rejectionem populi Judæorum, et eversionem miseræ Jerusalem. Hieron. in Matt. xxvi. 37. p. 129. Vid. et in ver. 39. p. 129, 130.

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heavy doom: so that it would be better for him, that he had not been born. He would likewise be disowned, and denied by another disciple: and all the rest would be offended in him. The minds of all his friends and followers, in general, would be pierced with inexpressible grief: and their just and reasonable belief in him, as the Messiah, built upon his mighty works, and the testimonies that had been given him from heaven, would be greatly shaken, if not quite overthrown. The Jewish people, with their rulers, would contract much guilt, and bring upon themselves heavy judgments and calamities. And how our Lord's mind was affected with the foresight of the desolations of Jerusalem, we well know from the tears which it drew from his eyes, and from the mournful lamentation which he made over that city, Matt. xxiii. 37—39. Luke xiii. 34, 35; ch. xix. 41—44.

From these, and other thoughts and considerations, present to the comprehensive mind of the blessed Jesus, justly did he renew that prayer: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

I am aware that some would affix another meaning to that prayer, and argue that our Lord did not deprecate his passion. But I think, with little success, and with less reason.

They say, how could our Lord pray against his passion, when he had reproved Peter for attempting to divert him from the thought of it? But our Lord's prayer was not founded upon Peter's views. Nor did it proceed from Peter's worldly temper. And after all, he added: "Not my will, but thine be done." He was resigned, and willing, and ready to take the cup, if infinite wisdom saw fit that he should take it, for advancing the interest of religion, and the good of men.

Some reluctance of nature upon this occasion, was not inconsistent with consummate virtue, and a full determination to acquiesce in what divine wisdom appointed. There is another plain instance of the like reluctance in regard to the same thing. "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name," John xii. 27, 28. [a]

These persons say, that by the cup which our Lord prayed might pass from him, he meant his agony in the garden, being afraid he should expire there. But is not that imputing to our Lord what is manifestly derogatory to his honour upon many accounts? For it implies distrust and want of faith, not easy to be accounted for, or reconciled with his high character, and his large experience of the divine presence with him. And it would be as difficult to reconcile this sense with the predictions concerning his dying the death of the cross, as any other interpretation whatever.

Once more, then, it is objected: How could our Lord pray, that the cup of his passion might pass from him, when he had foretold that he should suffer and die, and be raised again the third day?

But this objection likewise is of small moment, though of specious appearance. For, notwithstanding predictions, intervening events as they occur, both the good and the evil things of this life, and the actions of moral agents, will operate and influence the mind.

And whatever things are foreseen and foretold, we are to perform our duty to God and men, suitably to the circumstances which we are brought into in the intermediate space.

Our Lord foretold the treachery of Judas. And yet he often warned that disciple, and said enough to discourage and dissuade him from that evil conduct, and said in his hearing: "Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. Good were it for that man if he had not been born," Matt. xxvi. 24; Mark xiv. 21.

He also foretold the fall of Peter: and yet did a great deal to prevent it, giving such warnings and directions to him and the rest, as were most likely to secure their steadiness.

He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and the overthrow of the Jewish nation. Never-

Et in passione. Pater, si fieri, inquit, potest, transeat calix iste a me. Qui locus hunc sensum habet: Si potest fieri, ut sine interitu Judæorum, credat Gentium multitudo, passionem recuso. Sin autem illi excæcandi sunt, ut omnes gentes videant, fiat, Pater, voluntas tua. Id. in Is. cap. viii. p. 84. Conser. Euseb. in Ps. 87. al. 88. p. 548, 551, 552.

[a] Which place is exactly parallel with that which we are now considering. For it is, as if he had said: 'I have prayed, 'saying, "Father save me from this hour." Yet I am willing to do and suffer what shall be most for the advancement 'of thy glory, and the interest of religion in the world. My 'first and chief desire is, that "thy name may be glorified." 'Thou therefore by thy all-wise Providence, order what may 'be most conducive to that end: and I acquiesce, whatever 'it is.'

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theless, after his ascension, his apostles, by his special direction, did all that was in their power, by preaching and working miracles among that people for a long season, to bring them to repentance, and to prevent their final ruin.

In like manner our Lord had foretold his own ignominious sufferings and death, and his resurrection afterwards. Nevertheless he was greatly concerned in the near view and approach of those sufferings. If he had not he had not been man. Nor does he dissemble it. For [a] going out with his disciples after supper to the mount of Olives, when he came to the place called Gethsemane, he said to the rest, "Sit ye here whilst I go and pray yonder. And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy," or to be in great concern of mind. "Then he saith unto them: My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Which prayer he also repeated.

Meditating in this retirement on the sufferings he had in view, he earnestly recommended his case to infinite wisdom, expressing acquiescence in the divine will whatever it should be. After which he was strengthened and comforted by the presence of an angel sent to him from heaven, and by considering "the joy that was set before him," Heb. xii. 2, and the benefits that would accrue to mankind by his death and resurrection.

Whereupon he arose, went out to meet him that betrayed him, and those who came to apprehend him, and went through the amazing scene of sufferings that followed, with full composure, and all the indications of a most excellent temper, which have been delineated, though too faintly, in the preceding part of this discourse.

Our Lord said to his disciples, "Watch, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing; but the flesh is weak." He was himself an example of those duties, suited to all, the best, and the strongest, in a state of trial. And he was an instance of the benefit of them.

There can be no doubt, that the apostle refers to these devotions of our Saviour, in those words, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, to him that was able to save him from death. And was heard in that he feared," Heb. v. 7. Or, was [b] delivered from his fear.

Our Lord's devotions in the garden, if duly considered, are liable to no exceptions. They are edifying, and exemplary. Acquiescence in the divine will is always reckoned by wise men [c] a proof of perfection of virtue, or of great progress therein. If there be no sensibility to pain and shame, nor any apprehensiveness of mind in the prospect of sufferings, there can be no virtue in resignation to the disposals of Providence. The greater the sensibility of any human frame to the evils of this life, the greater must be the virtue of resignation under them; and the more engaging is the example of such [d] patience. [e]

2 The view which we have now taken of our Lord in his last sufferings, may be of use to confirm our faith in him, and increase our esteem for him, and enable us to vindicate him against such as would detract from him. Indeed he is, in all respects, the greatest character that has appeared on this earth. "Never man spake like him," John vii. 46. Nor has there ever been any other man who lived and died as he did.

3. The view which we have now taken of our Lord in his last sufferings may be of use to lessen our regard for worldly honour and grandeur, and to abate our dread of the evils of this life.

[a] Matt. xxvi. 36—46. Mark xiv. 32—42. Luke xxii. 39—46.

[b] See Whitby upon the place.

[c] Ινα δυνηται λεγειν εν τη φυλακη, ω φιλε κριτων, ει ταυτη τοις θεοις φιλον, ταυτη γενεσθω. Arrian. Epict. l. 1. c. 4.

[d] Vid. Cleric. H. E. ann. 29. n. xliii.

[e] Says that good man, and great preacher, Abp. Tillotson: 'All this our Lord bore, not with a stoical and stupid insensibility, but with a true patience. For no man had greater apprehensions of suffering, and a more quick and tender sense of it than he had. He had not only the more manly virtues of wisdom, and resolution, and constancy; but was clothed also with the softer passions of human nature, meekness and compassion and grief, and a tender sense of pain and suffering; "He took our infirmities," says the prophet, "and bore our griefs." And this he expressed both in his agony in the garden, and in his behaviour upon the cross. He did not despise pain, but dreaded it, and yet submitted to it. He did not outbrave his sufferings, but bore them decently. He had a human sense of them, but bore them with a divine patience, resigning himself absolutely to the will of God, when he saw them coming: and when they were upon him, expressing a great sense of pain without the least sign of impatience. And hereby he was a pattern accommodated to the weakest and tenderest of mankind. He did not give us an extragavant example of bravery, and a sturdy resolution; but, which was much fitter for us, of a patient submission to the will of God, under a great sense of suffering." Serm. 166. the second upon 1 Pet. ii. 21, near the end. See likewise the beginning.

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If we should have a prospect of any great trial, we are to recommend ourselves to the disposal of Providence, and should submit our will to the will of God. If troubles befall us, we should aim to bear them with a greatness of mind resembling that of our great Master: that is, without murmurings and complaints, or dejection of spirits, with meekness and patience, and a comfortable hope and expectation of being vindicated, and rewarded in due time.

Such are the words of St. Peter, with which I conclude: "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. ii. 21, 22.

SERMON XXI.

DIVINE TESTIMONIALS GIVEN TO JESUS DURING HIS LAST SUFFERINGS.

And the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints, which slept, arose: and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.

I HAVE lately considered our blessed Lord's sufferings, chiefly in one particular light, for shewing the excellency of his behaviour under them, his greatness and majesty during a scene of the utmost scorn and ignominy, his meekness under the most heinous provocations, and his full trust and confidence in God during that hour of darkness which concluded his wonderful life.

I would now observe, in one single discourse, the extraordinary testimonials given from heaven in that season, to his innocence, and the dignity of his person and character.

The miracles of our Saviour's ministry, the spotless innocence, and the unparalleled excellency of his life and death, his resurrection on the third day, together with the mighty works done after his ascension by his apostles in his name, would have been a sufficient vindication of his character, and a full attestation to the truth of his doctrine, and the divine original of his mission: notwithstanding the reproaches, and other indignities cast upon him by envious and designing men.

Nevertheless the Divine Wisdom saw fit not to leave him without witness at that very season. And though our Lord was so far left and forsaken of God the Father, as to be given up into the hands of sinful men: and they were allowed to carry into execution their malicious purposes, so far as to put him to a painful and ignominious death: there appeared, even then, some tokens of God's especial favour and approbation of him who suffered, and of his displeasure against those who presumed to touch that excellent person.

1. In the first place, I observe what is said by the evangelist Matthew at the nineteenth verse of this chapter, speaking of Pontius Pilate the Roman governor in Judea. "When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of him."

There can be no reason to doubt that the terrifying thoughts of this dream were owing to a divine impulse. There are in the scriptures many instances of extraordinary intimations given to heathen people as well as others, in dreams, which must have been of divine operation: as Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Joseph's fellow-prisoners, and others; and to bad as well as to good men.

Pilate's wife when he was set down on the judgment seat, sent him a message, earnestly intreating him not to pronounce a sentence, or do any thing whatsoever to the prejudice of the person now brought before him, and accused by the Jewish rulers. For she had that morning a dream, in which her thoughts had been mightily disturbed with the apprehension of calamities likely to befall Pilate and his family, if he should pronounce sentence against that person, who was just and innocent.

It was a testimony to our Lord's innocence, at the time that he was accused by the Jews. It was delivered publicly. Nor would the message have been brought at all, if it had not been

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judged important: but though it deserved the notice of all, it was more especially a warning to Pilate. It was a warning of an extraordinary kind, sent to him by his nearest relative, to deter and dissuade him from an action that could not but be criminal, and might be of fatal consequence.

Solomon says, "A dream cometh through the multitude of business," Eccl. v. 3; which may be a good way of accounting for ordinary dreams. In the night season, when the body is at rest, those things about which the mind was much engaged in the day time, may disturb the thoughts and produce dreams. But it does not appear that Pilate's wife could at this time have any knowledge of the Jewish prosecution of our Lord in an ordinary way. Jesus was not a prisoner that had been long in custody. He was apprehended late in the night, and was hurried away to the house of Annas, and then of Caiaphas. Having been there examined, and detained some while by the Jewish council, he was carried by them[a] early in the morning to Pilate: about which time his wife, still at rest, had a dream of an uncommon nature, in which she was admonished, and by which she was greatly affected. As soon as she awoke, she by the first opportunity sent this warning to Pilate, then upon his tribunal: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of him."

Elihu says excellently well: "God speaketh once, yea twice: yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed. Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction. That he may withdraw man from his purpose and hide pride from man," Job xxxiii. 14—17. Those observations may have been founded upon facts. There is an instance of a warning given to Abimelech, king of Gerar, in the time of Abraham, for preventing sin, and with effect, Gen. xxx. The warning, of which we are now speaking, was for the very same purpose. Nor was it altogether without effect. For this warning, now sent to Pilate, may be well supposed to have been one reason, together with his own clear discernment of the innocence of Jesus, upon examination, why he so long withstood the importunate and clamourous demands of the Jewish rulers and the multitude to pass sentence upon him.

II. In the next place we observe the darkness at this time, mentioned by three Evangelists. Matt. xxvii. 45. "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." Mark xv. 33. "And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour." Luke xxiii. 44, 45. "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened."

That is, there was darkness for the space of three hours, from the sixth to the ninth hour, according to the computation of the hours of the day in those times, reckoning the day from sun-rising to sun-setting: according to our method of computation, from about twelve at noon till three afternoon.

How great this darkness was, is not distinctly said. It might resemble that of a total eclipse of the sun, though there were glimmerings of light, whereby business might be transacted.

It was not in Jerusalem only, but in all the land of Judea.

That this general darkness was not natural, is apparent: for our Saviour suffered at the time of the Jewish passover, when the moon was at full. But natural eclipses of the sun, as all know, happen at the time of new moon.

This remarkable darkness must have been very awful and affecting, reaching all over the land of Israel where Christ had preached, and wrought many miracles. It continued three hours, and manifestly denoted the divine displeasure against the Jewish people for an action in which they and their rulers were guilty. Indeed, the main body of the nation was now assembled at Jerusalem, where Jesus suffered: and they could not but know for whose sake this darkness happened. However, that it might be the more observable, it was universal, over all the land of Judea, and for three hours; which was a remarkable testimony to the innocence and the dignity of the Lord Jesus.

III. The next extraordinary thing is the rending the veil of the temple.

At the fifty-first verse of this chapter: "And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom." So likewise Mark xv. 38. "And the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom." And Luke xxiii. 45. "And the sun was darkened. And the veil of the temple was rent in the midst."

[a] See Mattt. xxvii. 1, 2. Mark xv. 1. John xviii. 27, 28.

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There were two veils at the temple: one at the entrance into the holy place; the other between the holy place, or the sanctuary, and the most holy, or the holy of holies, called the inner veil, and the second veil, in the epistle to the Hebrews, ch. ix. 3. It is particularly described Exod. xxvi. 31—33; that is the veil here intended. It was of the strongest contexture, as well as of the richest materials, and the finest workmanship.

It has been thought by some, that the high priest might now, at this very time, be present in the temple, performing the solemn act of burning incense before the veil. There can be no doubt that many of the Jewish priests saw the veil after it was rent, and they must have been as fully convinced of the reality of this extraordinary event, as if they had been present when it happened.

It has been supposed by some, that this rending of the veil denoted and foresignified the sudden destruction of the temple, and the speedy abolition of the rites of the Mosaic law. But without relying too much upon any conjectural speculations, it may be reckoned certain, that it must have greatly surprised the Jewish priests, who entered into the holy place: and it gave ground to believe that the Divine Being was displeased with the Jewish nation. And upon a little reflection and consideration they might know the reason of the divine displeasure.

IV. At the same time there was an earthquake at Jerusalem, but especially at mount Calvary, where our Lord was crucified.

So this is expressed by St. Matthew very briefly, yet fully, ver. 51: "and the earth did quake and the rocks were rent." How this extraordinary event was then understood, and how it ought to be still understood by us, appears from what is added at ver. 54. "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

V. The fifth and last particular, is that in the text which may be reckoned a difficult portion of scripture, and the more so for being singular, without any parallel place. The words in connection are these, ver. 50—53: "Jesus, when he had cried with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom: and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; and the graves," or tombs, "were opened; and many bodies of saints, which slept, arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city (meaning Jerusalem, so called Matt. iv. 5, comp. Luke iv. 9) and appeared unto many."

Here it will be proper to consider several queries. 1. The place where this resurrection happened. 2. Who were raised. 3. The time when they were raised. 4. To whom they appeared. 5. Whether they soon after ascended up to heaven, or died again. 6. The truth of this history. 7. The use of this extraordinary event.

First, The place of this resurrection. Some have thought it might be done in several parts of Judea. But, upon due consideration, I believe it will be reckoned more probable, that the tombs here spoken of were near to Jerusalem, the holy city, into which these saints went soon after their resurrection. There was an earthquake at mount Calvary, where our Lord was crucified. There the rocks were rent. And by that concussion the doors of many tombs upon that mount and near it were thrown open.

It is well known to have been the custom of the ancients to bury without the walls of their cities. Here, upon mount Calvary, and near it, were many tombs: it being a rock it was a suitable place. We perceive as much from the evangelists: Matt xxvii. 58—60. "Joseph, a rich man of Arimathea, begged of Pilate the body of Jesus—and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock." John xix. 41. "Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man laid. There laid they Jesus." Compare Mark xv. 43—46; and Luke xxiii. 50—53. So eminent a person as Joseph of Arimathea had a sepulchre in this place. It may be inferred, that there were other tombs there, and some of persons of distinction. Out of those tombs, now opened, came the bodies of the saints here mentioned.

Secondly, Who were now raised? Some have imagined that the persons here intended were the most eminent patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament; but that opinion is without foundation. The tombs now opened, and out of which these saints came, as has been already argued, were near Jerusalem. But the patriarchs and ancient prophets could not be all interred in this place, or near it: nor could they at this time have any known tombs remaining. And there is an argument insisted on by St. Peter, after our Lord's ascension, which may be reckoned

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to overthrow this supposition. Having largely cited the sixteenth psalm, he says to the company then present at Jerusalem: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you concerning the patriarch David: that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day," Acts iii. 25—31. But if any of the ancient patriarchs had been now raised, in order to be assumed up to heaven, it might be reasonable to think that David would have been one of them.

Without offering any more arguments against that opinion, we may reckon it to be more probable, that the saints now raised up were good men, who had died lately, a few years, or rather perhaps not may weeks or days before, who upon going into Jerusalem would be well known to their friends still living. The miracle is more evident in the resurrection of such than of any others who had been dead and buried long ago, so as to be known by face to none then living on this earth.

The evangelist calls them saints: which word in the New Testament often denotes disciples of Jesus, who believed in him as the Christ. Acts ix. 12. "Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem." Compare xxvi, 10. and ch. ix. 32. "And it came to pass, as Peter passed through all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lidda." And see there ver. 41, and Rom. xv. 25, 26, and 2 Cor. i. 1; and other places. It is very likely therefore that the persons here intended by St. Matthew are disciples, or believers in Jesus, who had died not long ago.

Thirdly, We are to consider the time when these saints were raised. Were they raised when our Saviour expired? or, were they not restored to life until after his resurrection?

The words of the evangelist are: "And the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection." They did not come out of their graves till after Christ's resurrection: consequently I think they were not restored to life before he had risen. When our Lord expired, the rocks were rent by the earthquake, and the doors of the tombs were shaken and loosed and flew open. Nevertheless the bodies of these persons still rested there. We are therefore led to think, that when Christ arose from the dead, or soon after, these saints were restored to life: and then they came out of their tombs and went to Jerusalem early in the morning of the first day of the week.

Fourthly, To whom did they appear?

The text says, to many. We have already argued, that the saints, now raised, were persons who had not been long dead. It is likely, that they first went to their friends and acquaintance. To them they appeared: to them they were manifested to be the same persons, whom they knew to have lately died. They were known to them by their shape, their features, their discourse, their action. Thus they were known to their friends and relatives at their return to them. They therefore, who had been before acquainted with them, and knew, that they had been dead and buried, were now fully persuaded, that they had been raised from the dead. When these had been satisfied about their resurrection, they might be seen also by others, who, upon serious inquiries, were likewise persuaded of the wonderful work which God had wrought upon them.

Fifthly, What became of the persons, who were now raised? Were they soon after this assumed up to heaven? or did they die after their resurrection?

I answer, that there is no account of their ascending, or being assumed up to heaven. Which is so important a thing, that I think, it could not have been omitted, if it had been done. It is more probable therefore, that they died afterwards, as Lazarus did: whom our Lord, in a very signal manner, called forth out of his grave, after he had been dead four days. They behaved here among their friends and acquaintance with great modesty and humility: shewing little relish of the delights and entertainments of this life. Having been for a while examples of undissembled piety in this world, God gave them a comfortable and placid exit out of it.

In the sixth place, let us observe the truth of this history.

There can be no reason to doubt of it. Its being related by one evangelist only, is no objection. Each one of the evangelists has some things peculiar to himself, not mentioned by any of the rest. Nor is that at all strange, considering the copiousness of the subject. St. John, who had seen and read the first three evangelists, before he wrote, has confirmed their histories, and has also added divers things omitted by them. And yet he assures us, that there were still "many other signs" done by Jesus, John xx. 30, and that they were too numerous to be all written, and that those recorded are sufficient.

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However, some judicious commentators have been of opinion, that this very resurrection is intended, and foretold by our Lord, in those words, recorded in John v. 25. "Verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." And indeed our Lord does afterwards speak of the general resurrection, as a distinct thing from what is there mentioned. For he says, at ver. 28, 29: "Marvel not at this. For the hour is coming, when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth."

Seventhly, and lastly, we are to observe the uses of this miracle.

Doubtless, it was of advantage to some: though the resurrection of these persons, like that of Lazarus, might be without effect to others. But to their pious relatives, and divers others, who were serious and attentive, their return to life was matter of great joy, and an additional confirmation of their faith now, and all their days. They were hereby confirmed in the persuasion, that Jesus was the Christ, and in the belief of all the truths of his religion. And they were strengthened and animated for the trials and difficulties, which they might meet with in the profession of his name. Of such use was the resurrection of these persons to those who attended to it, as well as other miracles of Jesus, and the extraordinary appearances in his favour.

We will now make some reflections, suited to this argument.

1. We may perceive a great agreement between the life and the death of Jesus.

How great and excellent he was in his death, was lately shewn. He does also in all appear to be the beloved of the Father. There were testimonials to his dignity at his birth, and afterwards at his baptism, and in the course of his ministry, and when he was gloriously transformed on the mount. Nor were there wanting extraordinary testimonials of the divine favour and approbation during the dark and gloomy scene of his last sufferings. Even then "he was not alone. But the Father was with him," John xvi. 32. Soon after which he was raised from the dead, and ascended to heaven. And many wonderful works were done in his name by his apostles. Such was the regard shewn to him, who was the Messiah, the well-beloved Son of God, and the desire of all nations.

2. It cannot but be pleasing to observe the mildness of all the wonderful works performed by Christ, and done in his favour.

His own miracles were healing and beneficent. His power was shewn in restoring health, or limbs, or senses, or life. Scarce any miracle detrimental, except that one emblematical miracle of withering a barren fig tree.

It is the same at his death. This most excellent person, to whom so many then living were indebted for the most valuable benefits, is betrayed, apprehended, condemned, insulted, derided, crucified. How aggravated, how commplicated was the iniquity of those proceedings! How grievous must those indignities have been to the innocent sufferer! and how offensive in the sight of the supreme Lord of all! And the divine displeasure was manifested. There was universal darkness over the land of Israel for three hours: the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom: the earth too was shaken, and rocks were rent. Awful and affecting events! And yet no dwellings were overturned, nor men swallowed up. The earthquake was preternatural, and reached so far as God appointed, and no farther, without doing any damage. And moreover, when Jesus dies, or when he riseth again, the tombs are not only opened by the shaking of the earth, but many saints also are awakened and restored to life.

The divine wisdom, power and goodness are here very conspicuous. And every sincere Christian has reason to triumph, and glory in the evidences of the truth of his religion. The doctrine is reasonable, the promises are most gracious and comprehensive, and the evidences of its truth are affecting, forcible and convincing, yet mild and beneficent.

3. The testimonials given from heaven to the authority and dignity of the Lord Jesus, during his painful and ignominious sufferings, should induce us to shew him all honour and reverence.

Let us be cautious of despising or slighting him, or any of his sayings. Let us not dare to speak a word, or admit a hard thought against the Son of man, who was also the Son of God: who suffered so meekly and so greatly: and who whilst he was despised and abused by mistaken and prejudiced men, had honourable testimonials from him, who is Lord of heaven and earth.

Nor let any of us, who bear the character of his disciples and followers, by an unworthy behaviour, or by leaving and forsaking him, expose him again to shame and reproach.

Finally, Let these meditations on the greatness as well as meekness of Jesus under sufferings,

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and the testimonials of divine favour and approbation then given him, inspire us with courage and resolution in the profession of his name, and the performance of the duties he has enjoined upon us, whatever reproaches or other disadvantages our fidelity to him may bring upon us: not doubting of a happy issue, and that if we suffer with him, or for him, we shall reign with him hereafter: and that, if we now honour him, (though not altogether as he deserves, and we sometimes could wish, when our hearts are affected with the greatness of his love) he will honour and glorify us with himself in the kingdom of his Father.

SERMON XXII.

THE ROMAN SOLDIERS AND THE JEWISH RULERS.

And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money to the soldiers. Saying: Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away whilst we slept. Matt. xxviii. 12, 13.

At the end of the preceding chapter, we are informed by the evangelist, that at the request of Joseph of Arimathea, Pilate granted him the body of Jesus after he had been crucified. "And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre. Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation" (by which must be understood the sabbath, the seventh day of the week) "the chief priests and pharisees," or some of them, a deputation from the council, "came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we remember, that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead. So the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them: Ye have a watch. Go your way, make it as sure as you can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." The guard would prevent violence. And the seal would be a security against any fraud of the soldiers, in confederacy with the disciples, if that could have been suspected.

Then at the beginning of the twenty-eighth chapter. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn, toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And behold," a short time before their arrival, there was, or had been, "a great earthquake. For the angel of the Lord decended from heaven, and came, and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him the keepers, "the guards," did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered, and said unto the women: Fear not ye. For I know, that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here. For he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples, that he is risen from the dead—— And as they went to tell his disciples, behold Jesus met them, saying: All hail. And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them: Be not afraid. Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee. And there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all things that were done."

By this account it appears that our Saviour's resurrection, and the preparations for it, were gradual. "There was a great earthquake: an angel descended from heaven, and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. For fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." Now, at this instant, or soon after, the blessed Jesus arose, and came out of the tomb. Whether the guards saw the Lord come out of the sepulchre, and pass by them, is not altogether certain.

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The evangelist's expressions are strong. "For fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." It seems that they fainted, or fell into a swoon. If our Lord came out at that instant, they did not see him. But if they were recovered before he came out, and they saw him, they might be still under such an awe, as to let him pass leisurely and unmolested. For the first sight of a man returned to life, who had been dead and crucified, would be exceeding surprising. And the late earthquake, and the majestic appearance of the angel, still in view, who also, as may be supposed, shewed our Lord marks of subjection and reverence, as he passed, might make such impressions, as would restrain rudeness and violence.

If they did not see our Lord come out of the tomb, and pass by them; when they had recovered themselves from their fright, and looked round them, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, and that the body was gone, and they could make no doubt that the person whom they were set to guard was come to life.

From the order of the evangelist's narration we also perceive that our Lord had been raised to life some while before the soldiers came to the Jewish high priests. When the body was gone undoubtedly they had no farther business at the sepulchre. But it might require some time to recover themselves from the consternation they had been in: and before they went off they would look well about them. After which, as it seems, they retired to some house and rested themselves, and endeavoured to settle the account which they should carry to those who had employed them. Nor could they know how to find the chief priests so early in the morning. When they had access unto them, "they shewed unto them all the things that had been done:" that is, 'they told them that [a] whilst they were watching at the sepulchre at such an hour, there 'was a great earthquake, that they saw a certain being resembling human shape, clothed in a 'garment uncommonly white, his countenance exceeding bright and shining, who with amazing 'swiftness descended from heaven, and that at the sight of him they were seized with great 'consternation. He rolled away the stone, and opened the sepulchre. The body was gone, 'and the man was certainly alive again.'

For vindicating themselves they added: 'They did not believe any others would have 'behaved better. Who, but must have been in pain for their lives, when the earth trembled 'under them and around them? and when there appeared some god, or celestial being, from 'whose countenance issued flashes of lightning? If the body was gone, they could not help it. 'They were set to guard against the deceit and violence of men. But they were not able to 'contend with beings of a superior order.'

This was a disagreeable story to the high priests: and very unfortunately for their cause, the soldiers had not come directly to them: they had stayed by the way: and the high priests were justly apprehensive, that the account now brought to them, had been already divulged to others.

In so perplexing an emergency these chief priests thought it best to convene the whole sanhedrim. So it follows: "And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel," or deliberated and consulted what to do, "they gave large money to the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came and stole him away whilst we slept. And, if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

The summary remarks of a judicious writer [b] upon this history are to this purpose. 'The 'priests and pharisees must be thought a strange stupid sort of creatures, if they did not examine 'where the apostles were all night: beside many other particulars, which might have been a 'thread to lead them into strict inquiries, unless it was because they believed the report that 'the watch had brought them of Christ's rising again. When they had this certain reason to

[a] If it should be asked, how could the evangelist be assured of all this, and be able to relate these things so distinctly: I should answer, that the solution is very obvious. Some of the apostles, or other disciples of Jesus, had this account from the soldiers themselves, or others to whom they had related it. There was an interval of several hours between the opening the sepulchre and our Lord's resurrection, and their coming to the Jewish rulers. In that space they had much discourse among themselves about the things which had happened, and which had caused them so great surprise. And they had related them to several. It is also very observable, that the whole band did not attend upon the chief priests, but a part only. Matt. xxviii. 11. "Some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done." Nor is it needful to suppose that the soldiers, who had been bribed by the Jewish council, were strictly obedient to their orders, and never said any thing but what they had been taught, when they knew otherwise.

[b] Burnet upon the Articles, p. 64.

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'believe it, and yet resolved to oppose it; the only thing they could do, was to seem to neglect 'the matter, and only to decry it in general as an imposture, without going into particulars. 'Which certainly they would not have done, if they themselves had not been too sure of the 'truth of it.'

"His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept."

I propose to show the falsehood and improbability of this report.

And then I shall add some observation upon this history of the evangelist.

Concerning the first, it may be thought, that I am about to take needless pains, the saying being so very absurd. And indeed, it is well that it deserves little regard, and that it appears so to us, after having carefully attended to the evidence of our Saviour's resurrection. But as "this saying was commonly reported among the Jews," it may be worth the while to show in some particulars, how unlikely it is, and that it could not be then much regarded by any, but such as were very weak, or very much prejudiced.

1. It is very unlikely that a guard of Roman soldiers should sleep upon duty.

For the Roman discipline was extremely strict. Such a thing would be improbable among any people, especially among the Romans. And for certain, they who set them here gave them a strict charge to be vigilant. Nor was there any long or tedious service required of them. The whole season of their attendance could not, at the utmost, much exceed four and twenty hours. The sabbath was begun when they were placed at the sepulchre. And soon after the sabbath was over, the body, which they were to take care of, was gone, and they came down into the city to let the high priests and Jewish rulers know what had happened.

2. The absurdity of this report is manifest from itself.

For men cannot say what is done when they are asleep. If the disciples had attempted to take the body away, and they knew it, they must have been awake, and could, and would have prevented it. If they were asleep, they deserved to be punished. But they could not make any credible report of what was done whilst they were in that condition. If the body was carried off whilst they were asleep, they could not say by whom it was done. Whatever happened at that time must have been altogether unknown to them.

3. If the guard of soldiers had fallen asleep as they were watching at the sepulchre, they must have awaked if any attempt had been made to steal away the body.

For the body had been laid in a new tomb hewn out in a rock. And a large stone was laid at the door of it. And after that the Jewish high priests had seen it securely fastened. It was impossible, in an ordinary way, that the sepulchre should be opened, and the body in it taken thence, without a good deal of noise, which must have awakened such as were near.

4. The remaining of the burial clothes affords proof that the body was not removed by friends or other men.

The women, who had been at the sepulchre, came to the disciples, and told them what they had seen. Luke xxiv. 12. "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre: and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself. He beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves." The meaning of the original word, I think, is this: 'He saw nothing but the linen clothes lying.' Or, 'he saw the linen clothes only lying on the ground.'

This is more particularly related by St. John xx. 1—8, who gives an account of his own and Peter's going together to the sepulchre. "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together. And the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying. Yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre. And he saw, and believed."

This circumstance is a proof that the body was not stolen away by the disciples, or other friends, nor by common robbers, nor by any other persons. Whoever came upon such a design, would have been in a hurry, and would have executed their design with all possible expedition: whereas here are marks of leisure and composure.

* Et quis credet, tot milites, vigiliis perpetuis assuetos, circumfusos sepulchro, in re tanti momenti, summæque expectationis——jacuisse omnes quasi lethargo sepultos? Pol. Syn.

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5. It is not conceivable, that the stealing away, or the clandestine removal of the body of Jesus, could answer any purpose whatever; therefore it was not thought of nor attempted by any.

I presume it was not intended or attempted by enemies: for it must have best answered their purpose that the body should remain where it had been laid; and, if produced on the fourth day after the death of Jesus, it would have overthrown all reports of his resurrection.

Nor is it conceivable that it should answer any design of the disciples: for what could they have done thereupon? By stealing away the body they would have been guilty of a great offence, and would have been liable to a heavy punishment. What expectation could they have had of support and defence either from God or men, in asserting and teaching the resurrection of Jesus, which they knew to be a lie and falsehood?

6. There does not appear any where in this history, any intimation of the disciples' expecting the resurrection of Jesus: therefore they did not contrive any account of his being risen; nor had they beforehand any thought of it, till they had more than sufficient evidence of that event.

If the disciples had in their minds contrived a design of the resurrection of Jesus, some hints would have appeared in the gospels of their having an expectation of it. There is a long and particular account in the gospels, written by four several persons, in which the tempers, and designs, and actions of various sorts of persons are exhibited during our Lord's prosecution, crucifixion and burial: but not any the least notice, or opening of such an expectation in the minds of any of the disciples. When our Lord is apprehended, the disciples flee and abscond. Peter, who goes into the hall of the high priest, is so affrighted when challenged, that he disowns all acquaintance with Jesus. When "the women," who had been first at the sepulchre, "returned," as St. Luke says, ch. xxiv. 9—11, "and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest, their words seemed unto them as idle tales, and they believed them not." And afterwards, in the evening of that day, as two of the company of the disciples were going to Emmaus, when Jesus came to them, as a stranger, and asked them, "What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, and are sad?" they tell him "concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in word and deed, whom the chief priests and rulers had delivered to be condemned, and had crucified. But we trusted," say they, "that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done: yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre."—And thus they go on till our Lord interrupts them, "and says to them: O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

Nor does the expectation of our Lord's resurrection appear in any others. But all were thrown into a state of dejection and despondency upon the death of Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus bury the body, as if it were to lie there till the general resurrection. And the third day after his crucifixion, the women that had shown him so much respect before, come to show it again, by more completely embalming his body.

Since therefore there is not any where betrayed an expectation beforehand of his rising from the dead, the story of his resurrection is not a contrivance of the disciples. Nor did they remove the body, that they might with the better assurance give out, that he was risen.

7. This saying of the guard must have been false, forasmuch as no punishment was inflicted upon any for taking away the body.

This was their saying. This is what the Jewish council directed. "They gave large money to the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away, whilst we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you."

If this saying be true, here were two great and heinous offences, deserving a severe punishment. 'The guard of soldiers slept when they were upon duty.' That is the first offence. 'The disciples came my night, and stole him away:' another very great offence, no less than robbing a sepulchre, and also deserving severe punishment. And yet no one is punished. Nor is there any design formed, or attempt made, to bring guilty persons to justice. A certain sign, that the Jewish rulers knew the falsehood of what they bid the soldiers to say, and report to the world; and that they themselves were persuaded that Jesus was risen from the dead.

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It has been very justly observed upon this history: 'The priests going along with the 'party of soldiers placed them in their post, and sealed the stone that was rolled to the door 'of the sepulchre, to hinder the guards from combining with the disciples in carrying on any 'fraud——Thus whilst the priests cautiously proposed to prevent our Lord's resurrection from 'being palmed upon the world, resolving, no doubt, to shew his body publicly after the third 'day, as an impostor, they put the truth of Christ's resurrection beyond all question, by fur- 'nishing a number of unexceptionable witnesses to it, whose testimony they themselves could 'not refuse.'

So that this saying is not only false, and exceeding improbable, but it also serves to confirm the belief of our Lord's miraculous resurrection from the dead.

8. It remains therefore, that the testimony of the disciples of Jesus concerning his resurrection is true and credible.

There is nothing incredible, nor improbable in the thing itself, that Jesus should rise from the dead. If we do but consider what miracles he wrought during his life on earth, and how excellent a doctrine he taught, that he was a prophet mighty in word and deed, so as none before him had been, and what signal testimonies were given to him from heaven in the time of his ministry, and during the time of his crucifixion, and at his death; and that he openly declared more than once, that after having been put to death, he should rise again in three days. If we consider all these things, his resurrection cannot be thought improbable.

Moreover what the disciples say, they aver upon good grounds. They saw him, and conversed with him frequently, and had full satisfaction of his being alive. Therefore he was risen again. For all men knew that he had been put to death, and had expired on the cross, and was laid in a sepulchre. They themselves were with difficulty convinced of his being alive again after his passion. But seeing evidently, that it was he with whom they had conversed formerly, and seeing him often, they could no longer withhold their assent. And being convinced, they openly published the Lord's resurrection to all the world.

And, in the name of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, they wrought many miracles, which were testimonies given from heaven by God himself to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

This testimony to the resurrection of Jesus was received. Many at Jerusalem hereupon believed in Jesus as the Christ. Which could not have been, if he had not risen from the dead. For, if he had remained in the grave, no one could have any expectations from him. His word, in that case, had failed: and there could not have been any ground to rely upon him, and trust in him. But because his word had not failed, but the promise made by him had been fulfilled, of coming again to his disciples, and endowing them with power from above, therefore many believed on him.

Finally, the report, or testimony of the disciples, is consistent, and harmonious throughout. They teach, that Jesus is risen from the dead, and their behaviour is suitable to such a faith and doctrine.

Once they were timorous, dejected, inconsiderable. But now, when they say, Jesus is risen from the dead, they are knowing, discreet, intrepid in dangers, and glory in sufferings; and they inspire the like sentiments in others. They all unanimously bear witness to the resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus. Nor can any of them, or of those who receive their testimony, be brought to disown or conceal this thing. They therefore knew, and were persuaded of the truth of it.

And now they preach the doctrine of the gospel to all, a doctrine of the greatest importance, words, on which the life and happiness of men depend, Acts v. 20. They address the whole nation at Jerusalem, saying, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words," ch. ii. 22.——"Let all the house of Israel know, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ," ver. 36.——"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins," ver. 38.——"Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.——Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities," ch. iii. 19—26. In a word, the illiterate disciples of Jesus, who was lately crucified, are now superior to all men. And they "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," Matt. xix. 28, Luke xxii. 30, as he had foretold, and promised. A demonstrative proof, that their master was not still in the

[a] Macknight's Harmony. Sect. 147. p. 200.

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grave, but was risen from the dead, and that he was ascended up into heaven, and had sent down upon them the promised gift of the Spirit.*

II. I would now mention some remarks, partly instructive, partly practical, upon this history of the evangelist Matthew.

1. Sad is the condition of a people when their rulers and teachers practise themselves, and recommend to others falsehood and prevarication, and other wickedness.

Such conduct we see in the Jewish rulers. They had before given money to Judas, to induce him to betray into their hands an innocent and excellent person, and also sought for false witness to put him to death. Here is another like instance of their disregard to all religious obligations. Now they have to do with heathens, Roman soldiers, and they put into their mouths a downright falsehood, and tempt them with money, and give them a large sum, to say as they directed them. We may charitably hope, that it was not the act of all the Jewish council, or of every one in it. But it is a deliberate thing, and there was a general concurrence in this great and aggravated wickedness. Some of the guards came into the city, to the priests, who had placed them at the sepulchre. They convene the council, and when they had consulted together, "they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying: Say ye, that his disciples came by night, and stole him away, whilst we slept."

It is a studied falsehood, contrived by the chief priests and rulers, when assembled together. Justly did our Lord reprove the hypocrisy of these men. How much irreligion and baseness, and every evil thing prevail and spread among a people that are under such rulers and instructors!

2. Here is another instance of the sad degeneracy of men, and the hardness of some men's hearts.

The guard of soldiers were actually present at our Lord's resurrection. An angel descended, and appeared in a glorious form: the door of the sepulchre was opened, and the earth shook, and the "keepers trembled." These things the soldiers themselves had told the chief priests, and particularly how they had been affrighted: but all this terror soon wears off. The Jewish elders put a contrived falsehood into their mouth, and offer them money, which they take, and say as they had been directed.

3. We likewise here see the dangerous consequence of an inordinate love of worldly gain, and indeed of the prevalence of any bad principle in the heart.

The fear of God should always possess and govern us. If an inordinate love of worldly gain, or an excessive fear of any worldly evil be admitted, there is great danger that the next temptation we meet with may make a breach in our integrity.

4. This history may put us upon our guard against every temptation to a known falsehood, and make us very apprehensive of a lie.

We know not what may be the consequence: the mischief is oftentimes wide and durable. We may say, that the mischief of some lies is infinite and without end. The bad effect of this lie of the soldiers is dreadful to think of. It was the occasion of the unbelief of many of the Jewish people at that time: which also affected their posterity, and more persons than we can distinctly apprehend. "This saying," says St. Matthew, "is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." This lie was cherished and propagated by many, for justifying their own infidelity, and for hardening others against the testimony of Christ's apostles, and the evidence of the many miracles wrought by them.

Every man knows when he utters a lie; for it is something contrary to his own inward persuasion; but he may not be always able to foresee the consequences. The soldiers knew the falsehood of what they said; but they did not duly consider the issue of this calumny upon the disciples. We now can better perceive it than they did, when they were first drawn into this prevarication. This therefore may increase our dread of a lie. We know it is not innocent. We feel it to be contrary to our own conviction: but it may be worse than we are aware of; and may have consequences which we do not think of.

5. This history may help us in forming a just and great idea of the diligence and zeal of the apostles of Jesus in asserting his resurrection, and spreading the doctrine of the gospel in the world.

* If this sermon is too long to be read at once, here is a proper pause.

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They met with, as we hence perceive, many opposers, and a powerful opposition. Force and fraud, and every method was taken to suppress and invalidate their testimony, and to defeat their endeavours. They therefore must have been laborious and active, zealous and diligent; or they had not prevailed as they did. And we should learn to imitate them if there be occasion. And occasion there is, and will be. There always will be adversaries of the truth. Nor should we grudge any labour for promoting the principles of true religion. But should do our utmost to convince gainsayers, to strengthen those who believe, and assist such as are disposed to admit the evidence that is fairly set before them.

6. From this text we may argue, that St. Matthew's gospel was not written quite so soon as as some have been willing to suppose.

Some have been apt to think, that the gospel according to St. Matthew was written about eight years after our Lord's ascension. But the account of the most ancient Christian writers which we have, is, that it was not published till about thirty years after our Lord's ascension. Which date much better suits the expression of the text than eight years. "And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day." Which words imply, that some considerable space of time had passed since the event here spoken of.

Indeed, a written gospel was not immediately wanted. And a period of between twenty and thirty years after our Lord's resurrection was early enough. There would be still living a good number of the eye and ear-witnesses of our Lord's person, teaching, and miracles. As believers were by that time become numerous, some would desire to have written memoirs and histories of the Lord Jesus. And the doctrine of Christ having made considerable progress in the world, many copies of the gospels would be taken soon after they were written. Which affords the best security for their being preserved, and transmitted sincere and uncorrupted to future times. We seem to have good reason to believe, that the first three gospels were all written about the same time. These, soon after they had been written, were brought to St. John, who thereupon wrote, and published his gospel as a supplement; thereby both confirming their histories, and making some valuable additions to them. And probably, all the four gospels were written before the destruction of Jerusalem.

7. Every one must observe in this context a remarkable instance of the fidelity, impartiality, fairness and simplicity, with which the history of the Lord Jesus has been written by the apostles and evangelists.

They have recorded many injurious reflections cast upon our Lord himself in person. Here is mentioned a calumny upon his disciples. And it is a thing that seems to weaken their testimony in a point of the greatest importance; and, if true, would overthrow all the evidence of the resurrection of Christ. And though not true, it obtained credit with many Jews. And yet the evangelist has been so fair as to put it down. This honesty and simplicity of narration must, in the esteem of all good judges, recommend the evangelist's performance; and induce men to receive every thing else related by him.

And this is what Christians should still imitate. They should not be afraid of difficulties and objections: but should be willing to state them clearly and fully; or let them be so stated by others. There is a superior evidence for truth. Otherwise, we should not be able to say, that it ought to be received. And when things are carefully examined, and impartially considered, that superiority of evidence will be discerned and allowed of.

"The disciples came, and stole him away whilst we slept." So said those persons who were set to guard the sepulchre of Jesus. Who therefore should know what was done there. But when we observe that this is said to have been done "when they slept:" and when we do also take notice of the other things before-mentioned, it appears to be a story of very little significance. Yea it tends to confirm the persuasion of our Lord's resurrection as already shown.

To which may be added, that this story, or saying of the soldiers, assures us, and all men, that there was a guard set at the sepulchre, and that all possible precautions were taken to prevent fraud, and to hinder the disciples and others, if any had been so minded, from making, or feigning a story of a resurrection, when there was none.

The disciples had it not in their power to remove the body. Our Lord therefore was raised to life. The Divine Being interposed for his resurrection. And then supported the disciples in their testimony to the resurrection of Jesus, by wonders and signs, accompanying the word spoken by them. Therefore we need not be shy to represent things as they really are.

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8. Finally in the eighth place. We hence perceive the nature of the evidence, by which our Lord's resurrection, and the truth of the Christian religion are supported.

It is not an overbearing, but a sufficient evidence. It is not an evidence that leaves no room for cavils and exceptions. It is not such, but that some may reject it, if they are biassed and prejudiced; and may make a shift to satisfy themselves in so doing. But yet it is an evidence sufficient to persuade reasonable men. It will bear the strictest scrutiny and examination; and to serious, attentive, and rational men, it will appear convincing and conclusive; sufficient to induce their assent, and to encourage, and support their diligence and perseverance in the profession of religious truth, and the practice of virtue.

Let us, then, show ourselves to be children of wisdom, by diligently examining the evidences of the principles of religion, and by embracing and maintaining those which appear to be reasonable, and supported by good and sufficient evidence.

SERMON XXIII.

THE APOSTLE THOMAS.

Jesus saith unto him: Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. John xx. 29.

These words are part of a remarkable conversation between an affectionate disciple, and a more affectionate Lord and Saviour. Thomas, in the time of his Master's ministry, upon an occasion of great danger to his person, had been willing "to go, and die with him," John xi. 16. Jesus, out of love for his disciples, and for mankind in general, had now laid down his life, with as many aggravations of pain and disgrace, as the loss of an innocent life can well be attended with. But he was delivered from the grave, and raised up again to life, now to die no more.

And that the disciples themselves, and the world in general, might obtain the benefits proposed by his death and sufferings, and all his transactions on this earth, he was willing to give his disciples, and others who had known him, the most satisfactory evidence of his resurrection. The same love that had carried him through the pains of death, still reigned in the risen Saviour, and Lord of life. And he condescends, after his resurrection, to renew his acquaintance with his disciples, and to give them in a free and familiar manner the proofs of his being alive again.

He had already before this shewn himself to several, and to all the other disciples on the day on which he arose, ver. 19, 20. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them: Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed them his hands, and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord——ver. 34—29. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him: We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas: Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands. And reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side. And be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered, and said unto him: My Lord, and my God. Jesus saith unto him: Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The consideration of which words will lead me to three heads of discourse.

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I. The conduct of Divine Providence in not giving to all the highest evidence of the objects of faith, even the evidence of sight, or of extraordinary works done before them, and the reasonableness of that conduct.

II. That an evidence below that of sense may be a sufficient ground of belief.

III. The blessedness of such as believe, though they have not the highest evidence, that of their senses.

I. The conduct of Divine Providence, in not affording to all the highest evidence of the objects of faith, that of sight, or of extraordinary works done before them: and the reasonableness of that conduct.

Here it may be worth the while to observe, that the great and ultimate objects of faith are always, or at least, usually invisible to men in this world; and that none, or very few, have the demonstration of sense for their truth and existence. We believe the being of God: but he himself is invisible. They are his works only, the proofs and evidences of his being and perfection, that are visible. That the world was made, is the object of our faith, the subject matter of our persuasion. But we did not see it made. Nor could its formation be seen by any man. But we believe that it was made, from the considerations of reason, and from the testimony of the word of God conveyed to us. So it is also, when promises of temporal blessings are made to any for the encouragement of their obedience. God promised to Abraham, that he would give his posterity the possession of the land of Canaan. And Abraham believed that God would perform his word and promise. That was the object of his faith. But he did not see the thing believed. He might for his satisfaction have afforded to him the sight of some extraordinary effects, such as consuming his sacrifice by fire, and other miraculous appearances, to assure him, that the promise was made by God himself, and might be relied upon as certain. Still the object of his faith, that "his seed should possess the land of Canaan," was a thing future, distant, and invisible.

In like manner Christ's miracles were visible to those who lived at that time, and were present when they were performed. But his divine commission and authority, the thing to be proved by them, was not visible. Nor was the heavenly life, which he promised, visible to the men of that time, but only the evidences of it, his mighty works.

Of such things the disciples themselves had not a sight. It was only the evidence of them that was visible. After all that they had seen in Christ, the disciples, as well as others, were to exercise a faith of invisible things.

Thomas, and the other disciples, had the evidence of their senses, that Jesus, their master, was alive again, after his crucifixion. But the heavenly state, the future happiness of good men, the general judgment, the things to be proved by his resurrection, were still distant and invisible: not objects of sense, but assented to by faith only.

The difference therefore between the disciples of Christ, and others, who see not his miracles, is this. The disciples, and many others at that time, had visible and sensible proofs or evidences of invisible things. But still the heavenly state, and future retributions were invisible to them, and objects of faith. Others, who live not at the time of the revelation of the divine will, but after it, and after the ceasing of extraordinary works, and miraculous operations, neither see the heavenly state, nor the external evidences of it. But they receive upon testimony the evidences that had been set before others. Upon that testimony they believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the miracles wrought by himself, and by others in his name. And they admit them to be sufficient evidences of a life to come, and the recompences of it.

For shewing the reasonableness of this conduct of Divine Providence, in not giving to all the highest kind of evidence, it may be observed, that there seem to be but three several ways supposable for a revelation to be made by God to mankind, concerning the obligation of duty, and the recompenses of it.

For, if over and above the light, which may be attained in the exercise of our natural powers and faculties, God is graciously pleased to vouchsafe a revelation to men; in order to make it general, it must be one of these three ways: first, by a particular revelation of himself to every man in every age. Or, secondly, by affording a revelation in every age, and in every country, to some few, or a certain number of persons, endowed by him with a power of performing extraordinary works before other men, sufficient to satisfy them, that the doctrine,

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taught by those persons, is from heaven and the will of God. Which all ought to receive, and conform to, as the rule of life, and to rely upon, as the ground and measure of their hopes and expectations concerning future recompenses. Or, thirdly, God may send some messenger of high character and authority, who shall communicate his will to the men of some one age and country; and by many miracles give full proof, that what he delivers is with authority from heaven. And then they, who have received this revelation from the divine messenger, shall communicate it to others; who having received it upon good evidence, shall be bound, not only to conform to it themselves, but also to deliver, and transmit it to others; both the revelation itself, and the evidences of its divine original; that it may be handed down from age to age, as the rule of action, and the ground of comfort and hope to all.

This is very much the method, which we suppose God to have taken in the revelation by Moses, and by Jesus Christ, his well-beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour.

And it is not difficult to perceive, that the other two methods, before-mentioned, would be attended with many inconveniences, and very much break in upon the established order of things in this present world. Nor would they, in all probability, be more effectual, than the method which God appears to have taken.

II. The next thing to be shown is, that an evidence below that of sight may be a sufficient ground of belief and action.

And it is plain, that it is so, because in many cases men act upon it. And the evidence, which we still have of the revelation made by Jesus Christ, is a sufficient reason for receiving it, as a true revelation. For the account of it contained in the New Testament is delivered with all possible marks of simplicity and integrity. The revelation was received by a great number of persons from the beginning. It has been confirmed by great and remarkable effects, and the vast alteration which has been thereby made in the false notions and sentiments, and evil practises and customs of mankind. And from that time to this there have been many in the world, in every age, who have made an open profession of this doctrine; great numbers of whom have borne their testimony to it by patiently enduring all kinds of sufferings on account of it. And the resurrection of Jesus has been celebrated on the first day of the week in all the ages of Christianity. And his death, and all the wonders of his ministry, have been frequently remembered and rehearsed in the assemblies of his followers.

Though therefore we have not the evidence of sight, we have a sufficient evidence of the resurrection of Christ: and consequently, of all the religious truths which were to be confirmed by it: and by this evidence we may, and ought to be guided and influenced.

III. The third thing is the blessedness of those who believe, though they have not the evidence of sense, or the highest evidence of all.

The meaning of our Lord seems to be, that they are more blessed than they who believe only upon the evidence of sight. "Jesus saith unto him: Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The reason is this. Such do in this respect shew a greater love of truth, than they who yield only to the evidence of sight. They who have only the evidence of testimony, and that testimony conveyed through several successions of witnesses, have need to use more attention and care than they who have before them the evidence of sight.

They who out of love for truth, and a desire of the knowledge of religious principles, carefully examine this lesser kind of evidence, and the several branches of it, till they arrive at a full conviction of the truths attested, show a very good and laudable disposition.

They likewise manifest a humble and teachable temper in submitting to the will of God, and acknowledging the wisdom of this disposal: who has appointed visible and supernatural evidences of invisible things in that way, which is best adapted to the established order of nature, and so as may least break in upon the settled discourse of things.

Moreover they may be said to have a nobler faith, who upon an evidence, sure and satisfactory indeed, but below that of sight, are induced to be faithful to God, and practise self-denial in those many occasions in which it is necessary in the present state of things.

I may add farther, that they "who have not seen, and yet have believed," will have a faith in more truths than they who yield only to the evidence of sight: for we may know of many more things by hearing and reading than have been done before us. Certainly there may be

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good evidence of many remarkable works of God, and of many eminent acts of goodness, patience, meekness, integrity of our fellow-creatures, beside those which we have seen with our own eyes, done in distant parts, and in past ages. And, if upon due examination, we are persuaded of them, we may be thereby much confirmed in the belief of the truth of the invisible things of the heavenly state. And we may be established in the practice of virtue; and may be animated and strengthened in the Christian course, much more than we should be if we disbelieved every thing which we have not seen with our eyes.

APPLICATION. IV. I now proceed to mention some observations suitable to the subject.

1. We are led to observe in this history, one of the many instances of plainness, simplicity, and integrity, which do so much recommend the gospels to our belief and reception.

The apostle and evangelist John, who wrote this gospel, we may be assured had a respect to truth in his history: or he had not inserted this account of Thomas's unbelief; for though it is far from being honourable to that disciple, St. John has related it plainly. But it is a particular that may tend to satisfy us of the truth of our Lord's resurrection, in that there was such full proof given of it again and again to the disciples; so as to convince them all of it, though they had for a while been under great doubts and prejudices: therefore St. John has inserted this account that we might believe. As he says ver. 30, 31, "And many other things truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name."

2. From this text may be inferred the great necessity, and many advantages of serious and impartial inquiry and examination into the grounds and evidences of the principles of religion.

For it has not been at all my intention in this discourse, concerning the reasonableness of believing without the highest degree of evidence, to persuade any to believe without ground, or without sufficient evidence: nor does the text lead to any such thing, but quite the contrary. Thomas is not reproved for not believing, whilst he had no ground to believe; but because he had resisted very cogent evidence.

And the conduct of Providence in not affording to all the evidence of sight should put men upon examining and considering, with care and diligence, that evidence which is proposed to them. It was the duty of those who lived in our Saviour's time, before whom his miracles were wrought. There was, even then, a necessity of this. There were several branches of the evidence of his authority, and the truth of his doctrine. All which were to be carefully attended to, and impartially weighed. He himself referred them to these evidences. He directed them to consider the reasonableness of his doctrine, and its agreement with the writings of Moses and the prophets: to consider the testimony of John, and the greatness of his own works. John viii. 45, 46.

It is as needful, or more needful for us now to inquire and examine. We should be at the pains of observing the many proofs there are in the New Testament of the certainty of a Providence, a future judgment, and a life to come. We should, as we have opportunity, consider what evidence there is, that the books of the New Testament are the writings of the apostles and evangelists of Christ, to whom the mind of God was revealed. We may do well to observe the marks of simplicity, veracity and integrity, which there are in the historical parts of the New Testament: and also how reasonable, how perfect, how heavenly the whole doctrine of the evangelical scriptures, and consequently, how worthy of God.

This examination is a duty incumbent upon all, that they may gain such a knowledge, and rational conviction of the truths of religion, as shall be sufficient for their own satisfaction.

And for some others, who have more opportunities, and better abilities, it may be incumbent upon them, so far to inquire into the grounds and evidences of the principles of religion, as to be able to propound them to other men, and assist them in their searches after truth.

3. Which brings me to another observation upon this text and context in the third place, that it may be our duty, of some at least, to propose and recommend the evidences of the principles of religion frequently, and with great plainness.

Though some are greatly prejudiced, and hard to be convinced of some things that appear to us very reasonable and well founded. Yet if they have but sincerity of mind, they should not be abandoned as obstinate, and incapable of conviction.

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We have a strange instance of the force of prejudice in Thomas a disciple of Jesus, and unquestionably a sincerely good and upright man. He had heard all that Christ had before said of his dying, and rising again from the dead. He had also been assured by the other disciples, that they had seen the Lord since his crucifixion. They whom he well knew, whose honesty he had no ground to suspect, whose prejudices too had prevailed greatly, say to him: "We have seen the Lord." Here are ten witnesses concerning a point about which they could not be easily deceived. And very probably, some others, who had seen Christ separately, told him the same thing. Nevertheless, he did not believe them. Nor would he believe, he said, unless he should himself see and touch the marks of his crucifixion. Thus acted this person, because of some prejudices, too much favoured and indulged. Nevertheless Jesus did not give him up to his unbelief. But he comes again among his disciples, and at a time when Thomas was with them. He shows himself to him, speaks to him, and discovers the strange and positive demand that he had made for his satisfaction.

In like manner, may some others, good and sincere men, reject a sufficient evidence of some truths, on account of prejudices, which have been long and deeply rooted in their minds.

When this is the case, though they should withhold their assent to the first representation of the evidences of some truth; it may not be always reasonable to give them up. It may be fit to take some other opportunity to repeat the evidence or to set it before them in a different light, or to add new and farther proofs if they can be had. It is a kind and generous work, to carry men on from truth to truth, and bring them to a persuasion of every truth, conducive to the enlargement of their minds, and the increase and perfection of their virtue.

Thomas was a Jew and a good man, and believed the general articles of religion. But our Lord does not leave him there. For his own benefit, and the benefit of others, he affords him evidences of his resurrection, till he is convinced: that thereby he might have farther evidences of a future state, and be acquainted with all the inducements to virtue, and steadiness therein, which would flow from a belief of his resurrection: and might be also able to recommend them to others.

You know how St. Paul solemnly exhorts Timothy. "Preach the word," says he, "be instant in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine," 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

4. We may infer from the declaration of our Lord in the text, that the Divine Being in his acceptance of men, and in the recompenses he bestows upon them, has a respect to their several circumstances, and their suitable improvements.

It is a general maxim, mentioned by our Lord. Luke xii. 48. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. And to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

The doctrine of the text is to the like purpose. Our Lord pronounceth a special blessing upon such as have not seen, and yet have believed. He that did not see, has not all the same inducements to believe that Thomas had, who saw Christ after his resurrection. In this respect he excels Thomas, who believed upon the evidence of sight, and not before.

If then any one, with less and fewer advantages, attain to an equal degree of faith and virtue with him who has more and greater advantages, he is more commendable, and will be more blessed than the other.

It was very fit that all the apostles of Jesus should have the highest evidence; that they might give the best satisfaction to others concerning his resurrection, and that they might all be eminent examples of zeal, patience and fortitude.

And yet he who with less advantages equals them in zeal, patience and fortitude, may be reckoned to exceed and excel them.

We hereby see how difficult it must be to answer that question: "Who shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xviii. 1; a question which the disciples put to our Saviour, when their notions of that kingdom were too worldly and sensual. The question is still very difficult, though our ideas are enlarged: nor can we say, "who shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven;" or whence that person shall come: Whether from among those who lived in the time of our Saviour, who heard the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, and saw the wonderful works that he did; and thereby were filled with a lively faith in God, and in the Son of God, and were excited to labour, and endure hard things for his name's sake. Whether I say,

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he shall be one of those who "have seen, and therefore believed;" or whether he will be one of those "who have not seen, and yet have believed." Whether he may be one who lives in latter times, and by serious and humble inquiry and consideration arrives at a faith of equal strength and activity with those of the more early ages of the gospel, and labours, and suffers, and dies as they did.

Or, whether he shall come from among those, who under the obscurer revelations of the divine will, before the coming of Christ, arrived at eminence in all virtue and holiness.

Or, finally, whether he shall come from some of the dark places of the earth, where scarcely one ray of divine revelation has reached: and be a person, who under the greatest disadvantages for religious knowledge, arrived at some considerable justness of sentiments concerning God, and the way of serving him, and has been there an example of virtue to the men among whom he lived; who had sought, and found, and acknowledged the one God, Creator of the universe, and under great discouragements recommended the worship of God, and the practice of virtue.[a]

But though we cannot say who will be the greatest, we know, that "whoever hears Christ's sayings, and doth them," Matt. v. 19; whoever sincerely "keeps the commandments of God, shall be great in the kingdom of heaven," ch. vii. 24. And we know what are the virtues, and what the works which are in high esteem with the Saviour and Judge of the world: "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and such as are in prison" (especially when it is for a good cause) and other like offices of benevolence to our fellow-creatures in this state of trial.

Upon the whole, then, let us cherish and improve a faith of invisible things, by serious and impartial consideration; and attending to the evidence which God has given us: which, though not the highest, is very cogent and sufficient. And let us be concerned to shew our faith by works suited to the doctrine of Christ, which we have received, and all the advantages which we enjoy.

SERMON XXIV.

JESUS THE SON OF MAN.

And he said unto the disciples: The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it. Luke. xvii. 22.

The words of the text are owing to an inquiry concerning the time of the manifestation of the kingdom of the Messiah; accompanied, it is likely, with indications of their prevailing prejudice concerning its worldly nature. Ver. 20. "And when he was demanded of the pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come; he answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:" or with the outward pomp and splendour, visible in earthly kingdoms, exciting wonder and surprise, attracting the eyes, and pleasing the passions of carnal and worldly people.

Ver. 21. "Neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there: for the kingdom of God is within you." Neither will it come after the manner of worldly kingdoms, set up by a great leader, to whose standard all should be invited to resort, to put themselves under his protection, in order to join in advancing it, and share in its emoluments and advantages. "For behold the kingdom of God," though you are not pleased to regard it, and the signs of it are such as you disdain to

[a] 'Whoever places the true moral worth and excellence where it ought to be placed, I mean, not in the soundness of the head, but in the soundness of the heart, will easily discern, how possible it is for one professor, that is furnished with the scantiest stock of knowledge, to be a far better, worthier and more amiable character in life, than another who is possessed of the greatest. And if God, in the great day of tribulation, will render to every one according to his work; for the same reason it is not impossible, after all our boasted advantages in point of knowledge, but that a man, cast upon the most barbarous and illiterate part of the globe, may come off with more applause at that impartial tribunal, than our Clarkes, Newtons, or any other the most distinguished characters, whether of the philosophic, religious, or civil kind.' Dr. J. N. Scott. Serm. xx. vol. ii. p. 416, 417.

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observe, is within you, or among you. It is already begun to be set up, the kingdom of the Messiah is come, the doctrine of it is preached, the rules, and the rewards and privileges of it are published. And it is received by some, who even press into it, and are the willing subjects of it: and rejoice in and shall partake of all its blessings and privileges.

So the kingdom of God was then among them: but not literally within the persons to whom Christ was speaking, as some have thought. For if our Lord be supposed to speak directly to the pharisees, or of them, this kingdom was [a] not within them. It had not gained power in their minds, nor been received and acknowledged by them.

Ver. 22—25. "And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And when they shall say unto you, See here, or see there" [looking for the appearance of the Messiah] "go not after them, nor follow them: for as the lightning that lightens out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of man be in this day:" his kingdom will prevail on a sudden, and his doctrine will make a swift and amazing progress in a very short time, beyond expectation, and without the ordinary methods made use of in advancing worldly designs and interests. "But first he must suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation." So is the context.

In considering the words of this text there offer to us three several subjects of inquiry. 1. How are we to understand that character, the Son of man? 2. Who are the persons here spoken to, and said to be the disciples? 3. What our Lord says to them, or the design of this warning and prediction: "Ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it."

I. The first subject of inquiry is, how we ought to understand that character, the Son of man? And as it is frequently used by our Lord in speaking of himself, we may be desirous to determine the meaning of it. But here, as in many other cases, where certainty would be desirable, it is not a little difficult to find what shall be decisive.

Son of man is often in scripture equivalent to man. Job xxxv. 8. "Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man." Ps. viii. 4. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" And Prov. viii. 4, says Wisdom: "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men:" or to all men in general, and of every rank, to whom my instructions will be useful, Isa. li. 12. "I, even I am he, which comforteth thee. Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man, that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass?" And in like manner in many other places. See particularly Jer. xlix. 18, 33; ch. l. 40; li. 43. This then is one common, obvious meaning of son of man. It is the same as man.

Some think that the son of man, when used by our Saviour, denotes his high dignity, or a man of distinction and eminence, and is equivalent to Messiah, or the Christ: and that he hereby intends to signify, that he is the great person spoken of by the prophets, who was to come for the benefit of mankind. And indeed in Dan. vii. 13, 14, is this remarkable prophecy: "I saw in the night visions. And behold, one like unto the son of man," or like to a son of man, "came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people and nations and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." And our Lord is supposed to allude to this prophecy upon a very memorable occasion: when being before the high priest, he adjured him, saying: "Tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him: Thou hast said. Nevertheless I say unto you: Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. See also Mark xiv. 61, 62.

The Son of man, then, when used by our Saviour in speaking of himself, may denote his great character, the promised Messiah. This sense I do not absolutely reject, and it may be embraced by those to whom it approves itself.

Nevertheless there are some exceptions to be made against its being equivalent to Messiah, and against its being what our Lord intends thereby.

It seems to me, that the forecited text from Daniel is not a sufficient foundation for this opinion. The phrase is no where used in Daniel, but in the place just taken notice of, and in

[a] Illud εντος υμων recte vertitur in medio vestri. Conf. Matt. xxi. 43. Grot. in loc.

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one more; ch. viii. 17. Where an angel says to Daniel himself: "Understand, O son of man. For at the time of the end shall be the vision."

Though therefore in the other place of Daniel those words, "there came one like the Son of man," intend Jesus, the Messiah; it does not follow, that it is equivalent to Messiah, and is used by our Lord in that sense.

Another difficulty there is, which must be reckoned of some moment. Our Lord very often speaks of himself in the character of the Son of man. But yet he declined to own himself publicly, and ordinarily, to be the Messiah. There is a text in Matt. xvi. 13—16, which is observable. "When Jesus came into the coast of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying: Whom do men say, that I the Son of man am?" After they had mentioned the opinions of others concerning him, he asks their own. Whereupon "Peter answered: Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It seems therefore, that the Son of man, and the Christ, are not equivalent, and that the phrase is not so used by our Lord.

Moreover, if it had, it is likely, that the disciples and others would have often spoken of our Lord in that character, and would sometimes have made their profession of him in such words, saying, that they believed him to be the Son of man: whereas there is not one such instance in the gopels, and but one in the Acts of the apostles; ch. vii. 56, where St. Stephen says: "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." This phrase is also found in Rev. i. 13, and ch. xiv. 14.

It should be here observed by us, that man, and Son of man, with the Hebrews, often denote a man of low condition. "Hear this, all ye people,——both low and high, rich and poor together," Ps. xlix. 1, 2. The original Hebrew word rendered by us low is sons of Adam: evidently meaning men of obscure birth and low rank, or mean condition. "Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that thou takest account of him?" Ps. cxliv. 3. Where the Psalmist intends to represent the human meanness and wretchedness.

Farther, it is observed by learned commentators, that this denomination is given to some prophets, with this view, and in this sense, particularly to Daniel and Ezekiel. However, I think, it is but once applied to Daniel, and in the place before mentioned. But to Ezekiel very frequently. "And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious house," Ezek. ii. 3. And in like manner, very often in that book, almost in every chapter of it, and in some chapters several times. And it is said by those commentators, that this expression is there used with a design to admonish those prophets of their meanness and frailty, as men. Our Lord therefore by this phrase or character represents that humbling of himself, which is spoken of by the apostle in the second chapter to the Philippians, and is the same with what is said in Is. liii. 3, "he is despised, and rejected of men," or is one of the lowest and meanest of men.

Our Lord adopts this character in speaking of himself, in order to undeceive the Jews, and correct their false opinion concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, and to intimate, that he was not to arrive at glory, and the full possession of his kingdom, but through sufferings and humiliations.

Thus argue those interpreters, and, as seems to me, very cogently. And therefore, if Son of man be equivalent to Messiah, it is not used to denote his dignity, as the first and greatest of men, but rather to signify his humble form and low condition, in which he then lived: and is expressive of the scorn and contempt which was cast upon him, and in which he acquiesced.

Moreover, possibly, our Lord frequently makes use of this expression, to denote his real humanity, and also that he was not made and created as Adam, but was a man born even of a woman.

Once more, it seems to me, that our Lord takes this character as a modest way of speaking. Eminent and distinguished persons, who have many occasions to speak of themselves, especially if it be to their advantage, decline the too frequent use of the phrases I and me, and choose to speak in the third person, as of another, distinct from themselves.

Having mentioned all these several observations concerning this title and character, let us now take notice of some of the places of the evangelists where it is used.

Matt. xx. 17, 18. "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and scribes, and they shall deliver him unto the Gentiles." Here, and in

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other places our Lord may be supposed to make use of this expression, as a modest way of speaking. So also in John i. 51. "Thou shalt see greater things than these.——Hereafter shall ye see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." Which must be reckoned more agreeable to decorum, than to say upon me. John xii. 23. And "Jesus answered them, saying: The hour is come that the Son of man shall be glorified." Which likewise must be allowed by all to be more agreeable than to say: "When I am to be glorified."

And in the text. "The days are coming, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man." Our Lord might have said, "one of my days." We actually have that expression in John viii. 5, 6. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. And he saw it, and was glad." But he might choose, generally, to speak in the other way, especially as the title, Son of man, carried in it no ambitious aspiring meaning, but rather denoted a mean condition, as was before shewn.

Therefore let us observe a few more passages of the evangelists, where this character occurs. It seems to be used in the same manner in the text above cited. "Whom do men say, that I the Son of man," who appear in so mean a form, "am?" So likewise John v. 27. "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man:" that is, as seems to me, because of his present willing humiliation and abasement. So St. Paul, Philip. ii. 8, 9, having spoken of our Lord's "humbling himself unto death," adds: "wherefore God also has exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."

Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. "The high priest answered, and said unto him: I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said unto him: Thou hast said. Nevertheless I say unto you: Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man," that is, him, who now is in so low a condition, so humbled and abased, "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

And when St. Stephen says, Acts vii. 56, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God:" it is likely that he refers to our Lord's mean condition in this world, and the base treatment which he had received from the Jewish people. But though once he had been so low, he was now exalted.

And some judicious expositors think, that the title is to be understood as used with this view in that noted place of Daniel: "I beheld and one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven." He had a humble appearance, but he was greatly honoured and exalted. "He came on the clouds of heaven," and an extensive and everlasting dominion was given to him.

This title, then, being expressive of humility and abasement, is very fitly adopted by our Lord, in representing the glory conferred on him by the Father, of which he was obliged to speak, and to inform his disciples about it. Matt. xiii. 41. "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend." Matt. xvi. 28. "Verily I say unto you: There are some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." Matt. xxv. 31. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory."

These are the observations which have been mentioned for illustrating this title and character, so often made use of by our Lord when speaking of himself.

It sometimes denotes in scripture man in general, or any man. It is also used for a man of low condition. And for that reason, probably, is frequently used by our Lord in speaking of himself, as expressive of the low estate, in which he, the Messiah then was, and in which he willingly acquiesced. It was a modest way of speaking, and was suited to admonish the Jewish people, and correct their mistaken apprehensions concerning the worldly nature of his kingdom: and to intimate, that, as Messiah, he must suffer before he was advanced to glory. Moreover, such being his condition in this world, his followers also should expect the like, and be willing to submit to afflictions and trials here, that they may be thereby farther prepared and qualified for heavenly glory and happiness.

II. The second thing to be considered by us is, who are the persons to whom our Lord here speaks.

"And he said unto the disciples." Possibly, we need not thereby understand the twelve apostles. The word is sometimes used concerning the followers of Jesus in general, and of some who were not sincere, or well instructed, who attended on him for a while only, and with worldly

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views. So John vi. 66. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

If our Lord speaks to his disciples, others also are instructed in what he says, and designed to be so. I find this text paraphrased by a judicious expositor after this manner. '"And[a] he 'said unto his disciples, "or followers:" "the day will come, when ye," of this nation," shall 'desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it."'

III. Which brings us to the last inquiry: how we are to understand this warning and prediction. "The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it."

If this relate chiefly to the Jewish nation and people, or a large part of them, who now were, and still continued unbelieving: our Lord may be supposed, affectionately, and earnestly, to warn them of the sad circumstances which they were falling into. As if he had said: 'The 'time would be, when all the gracious means, afforded them by the Divine Being, having proved 'to be in vain, their ruin would be near, and their condition very calamitous. They would 'eagerly look for deliverance, and pretended leaders would offer themselves to their assistance 'in order to draw followers after them. But they would not be able to perform any thing to 'their advantage. The blessings offered by me in this mean form are despised. I set before 'you heavenly blessings, things of the greatest value. And I am able to perform what I promise. 'But they are not relished. The time will come, when with the utmost impatience you will 'wish for the appearance of the Messiah, to work out the temporal salvation which you desire. 'But the days will then be more calamitous and afflictive than those of the present season, under 'which you are now so uneasy. And they who will then offer themselves to you in that charac-'ter, as they will not bring with them a doctrine like mine, so will they absolutely fail in every 'attempt for your advancement, and your earnest expectations of deliverance will be utterly 'disappointed.'

And I cannot see, but that this may be reckoned the more direct design of our Lord, that is, to set before his disciples, in the hearing of others, the sad and deplorable circumstances of the Jewish people, if they did not improve the means afforded them by himself, and his apostles after him.

But if it be supposed, that our Lord here speaks to his own disciples chiefly, and to such others as sincerely believed in him: I apprehend, he must have had a respect to some prejudices, which still had too great an influence upon them. And what he says is to this purpose. 'That 'whereas they looked for great things in this world, and, with too many others, waited for a 'temporal salvation for the Jewish people, together with spiritual privileges, they would be disap-'pointed. The time would come, when they would esteem these happy days. Such would 'soon be the calamitous state of things in the land of Judea, that they would be glad to see a time 'of so much ease and quiet as the present. You will wish to see again one of these days of mine. 'But you will not. No! Your profession of my name, if your are faithful to me, will cost you 'dear. At that time you will mourn. The circumstances of things will call you to weeping and 'fasting, and every instance of self-denial. Improve then the present time: content yourselves 'with it: be thankful for it, and rejoice therein. For a better state of things is not to be expected 'in this land, and among those who dwell in it.'

IV. Having now in some measure explained this text, I would add a thought or two by way of reflection.

1. We perceive that every method was taken for saving the Jewish people, that could be used in the way of moral persuasion.

For our Lord, and his forerunner, and his apostles after him, preached among them the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven. They confined their preaching to them entirely, or chiefly, for a good while: and many miraculous works were done among them. They were called to repentance, and the joys and glories of a future life were set before them. Beside this, they were again and again informed of the judgments hanging over their heads: and with earnest concern and affectionate tenderness they were warned to take heed to themselves. They were assured, for their good, that this was the day of their visitation: if this opportunity should be let slip: if they did not now attend to the things of their peace, it would be afterwards too late. And moreover all expectations of another Messiah, and of temporal salvation by him, would

[a] Whitby upon the place. See also Doddridge's Family Expositor, vol. ii. p. 168.

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prove vain and delusive, and the disappointment would be most grievous and vexatious. The only way of saving themselves was to hearken to those who now, in the name of God, and with evident tokens of divine authority, invited them to repentance, with the great and sure promises of forgiveness and eternal life.

2. We also may hence learn our own duty, and consider this warning as delivered to us.

If what is here said did more especially relate to others, yet the disciples were not altogether unconcerned therein, and our Lord thought best to say it to them. "And he said to the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it." If we are not in any immediate danger of losing our temporal, or our spiritual privileges; yet, certainly, the best way to secure them is to value and improve them: to be thankful for them, and rejoice in them; and not to be uneasy and discontented for want of some greater things. The time may come when we shall wish, in vain wish, for such days as these: for a liberty of thought and inquiry, profession and practice: for freedom to unite together in the worship of God, though a few only, and those of low condition and mean appearance: to hear the Old and New Testament read and explained, and the truths of religion recommended and enforced by rational arguments, though without the ornaments of eloquence, in a plain manner: and to be exhorted to virtue by the consideration of its real excellence, the Divine command, and the consequences of it in a future state, though no worldly honours and preferments are now annexed to it.

Is there nothing agreeable, nothing satisfying in such entertainments as these? If such an advantage be despised and neglected, for want of worldly splendour and greatness, may there not be danger of an alteration for the worse? And if it should happen, a recovery of lost privileges may be very difficult. When once our portion is come to be unintelligible mystery, with numerous and showy, but empty rites and ceremonies, imposed by mighty and awful authority: we may desire to see one of these despised, unimproved days of reason and liberty, scriptural worship, and pure ordinances, but not be able to see it.

SERMON XXV.

JESUS THE SON OF GOD.

Go to my brethren, and say unto them: I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God. John xx. 17.

In discoursing on these words I shall first endeavour to show, in what respects God is peculiarly the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And secondly, the design of this message of Christ to his disciples, and in what sense God is also their and our God and Father.

1. That God is in an especial and peculiar manner "the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," may be inferred from the frequent use of that title and character [a] in the epistles of the apostles. In this text our Lord's style is remarkable. He does not say: "Go to my brethren, and say: I ascend to my Father and God:" but "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." In the gospels our Lord is often styled "the only begotten Son of God," and "the well-beloved Son of God." And the apostle to the Hebrews begins that epistle thus: "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." Though therefore others also are called "sons of God," the Lord Jesus is "the Son of God" in a sense peculiar to himself, transcendent and superior to all others.

Father and son are relative. If I show in what respects and on what accounts Jesus is the Son of God, it is at the same time shown, in what sense God is his Father. And I shall now mention these several respects, which, I think, are plainly expressed in scripture.

[a] Rom. xv. 6; 2 Cor. i. 3; xi. 31; Eph. i. 3. 17; iii. 14; Col. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 3.

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1. Jesus is the son of God upon account of his miraculous conception and birth.

Luke i. 31—35. An angel appeared to Mary, and said to her: "Fear not. For, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." When Mary asked, "how that could be: the angel answered, and said unto her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore that holy thing, that shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Here our Lord is expressly said to be the Son of God on account of his miraculous conception and birth. A like history of our Saviour's nativity may be seen in the first chapter of St Matthew's gospel.

St. Luke, who carries up our Lord's genealogy to the first man, concludes it saying: "Who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God." Adam, as seems to me, is here said to be the Son of God, as he was immediately formed by God out of the earth. So Jesus was formed of the substance of the virgin Mary by the power of God, or the special operation of the Holy Ghost.

2. Jesus is the Son of God, or the well-beloved Son of God, upon account of the most plentiful measure of the gift of the Holy Ghost conferred and bestowed upon him.

St. John having spoken of the "word" as "with God," and "God," and that "all things were made by him," says, ver. 14, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelled among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." It was not the word, which John and others beheld, but Jesus, in whom the word dwelled. Him they beheld, and his greatness, or glory was conspicuous: so that he appeared, and they knew him to be, "the only begotten of the Father," or the Messiah.

In other places of St. John's gospel this is expressed in other words. Ch. iii. 34. John the Baptist bears this testimony to Jesus: "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."

John x. 36. Our Lord himself argues with the cavilling Jews: "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" That is as a learned [a] expositor paraphrases that verse: "Say ye of him, whom the 'Father hath sanctified (by the Holy Ghost essentially dwelling in, or without measure imparted 'to him. John iii. 34.) and sent into the world, thou blasphemest because I (after this unction, 'and commission to make known his will to you) said, I am the Son of God?"' Or, as another [b] Expositor: "'Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified," that is, consecrated, designed, 'separated from the rest of men by a supernatural birth, and by a communication of the Spirit 'without measure, and by a special commission and authority to declare his will, "that he 'blasphemeth," because he has thus spoken?'

John xiv. 10. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself. But the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works." Which in other gospels is expressed by doing miracles by the finger, or spirit, or power of God. Luke xi. 20. "If I by the finger of God cast out dæmons, no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you." Matt. xii. 28. "But if I cast out dæmons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Which should be compared with John x. 38. "If ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him."

Matt. i. 22, 23, in the history of our Lord's nativity. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us."

Col. ii. 9. St Paul: "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" that is, really. In the temple of Jerusalem there was a glory, which was a symbol of the divine presence. But in Jesus Christ God dwelled really. Or, as St. John's expression is: "The word was made flesh, and dwelled amongst us."

By virtue of this indwelling of the Father, or this most plentiful and extraordinary communication of the Spirit, without measure, Jesus knew the whole will of God concerning the salvation

[a] Whitby.

[b] *Sanctifie.*] C'est à dire, consacré, destiné, separé, du commun des hommes par une naissance surnaturelle, par une communication d'esprit sans mesure, et par un pouvoir tout divin pour exercer la charge de Mediateur. Voyez le mot de *sanctifier* pris dans ce sens. Jer. i. 5. Lenfant.

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of men, and spake the words of God with full authority, and wrought miracles of all kinds, at all times, whenever he pleased, and had the knowledge of all things; even the thoughts and characters of men, and things at a distance, and things to come.

With regard to this it is, that St Paul says of our Lord, that he "was in the form of God," Philip. ii. 6. Which also answers to those expressions: "The brightness of the divine glory," or majesty, "and the express image of his person." Heb. i. 3.

This consecration, this sanctification of Jesus, this plentiful communication of the gifts of the Spirit to him, is sometimes expressed by anointing, and answers to the character of Messiah. So Acts iv. 27. "For of a truth against thy holy child," or servant, "Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate,—were gathered together." And Acts x. 37, 38. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. For God was with him."

Thus Jesus is the Son of God, on account of his having the Spirit without measure. And hence we see the reason, why the Christ, or the Messiah, and the Son of God, are equivalent expressions. That they are so, is evident from divers texts. John i. 34. John the Baptist says: "And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God." And, as it follows in the same context, two of John's disciples heard the testimony, which he bore to Jesus. "One of those two was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him: We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ:" or the anointed, and is plainly equivalent to what John the Baptist said: "this is the Son of God." Afterwards "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him: We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." When Nathanael is convinced of the same thing, how does he express himself? It is in this manner: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel:" two expressions, equivalent to that of Messiah.

The great article of faith in Jesus is sometimes expressed by believing him to be the Christ, at other times believing him to be the Son of God. John iv. 25, 26. "The woman saith unto him: I know that Messiah cometh, who is called Christ. When he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her: I that speak unto thee, am he:" or the Christ. Our Lord meeting the man, whom he had cured of blindness, says to him, John ix. 35, 36, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said: Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him: Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." Once more, 1 John v. 1, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God" Then at ver. 5, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

To all which texts let me add here one or two more. Matt. xii. 17, 18. "That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying: Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles." And what follows, taken from Isa. xlii. 1—4. And Heb. i. 8, 9. "But unto the Son he saith:—Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

3. Jesus is the Son of God, on account of his resurrection from the dead, on the third day, so as to die no more.

So the apostle says. Rom. i. 3. 4, "Concerning his son Jesus Christ, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Col. i. 18. "Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Heb. i. 6. "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world he saith: And let all the angels of God worship him." Which indeed some have understood of our Lord's coming into the world at his nativity. But more generally interpreters have understood it of our Lord's entering into his glory, and taking possession of his kingdom, after his resurrection from the dead. Which brings us to one thing more.

4. Jesus is the Son of God, on account of his exaltation to God's right hand, and being invested with authority and dominion over all flesh, and constituted the judge of the world, by whom God will pass sentence upon all mankind.

John iii. 35. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath put all things into his hands." Ch. v. 21, 22. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

Philip. ii. 9, 10. "Wherefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name which

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is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Eph. i. 19, 20. "According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Heb. i. 2. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he has made heir," or Lord, "of all things." Ch. iii. 5, 6. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant.—But Christ as a son over his own house."

Some now by the Son of God understand an intelligent being, or emanation, begotten by the Father in an ineffable manner from all eternity, and of the same essence or substance with the Father. Others, a mighty spirit or angel, begotten or formed by the will of the Father, in time, before the creation of the world, and of a different substance from the Father. Which Son of God, eternally begotten, or in time, became incarnate; that is, united himself to the human nature, consisting of soul and body, or to human flesh, so as to supply the place of a human soul.

But it does not appear to be any where used in that sense in the gospels, where it frequently occurs. We find it in the professions some made of their faith in him, or their acknowledgments of the great character which he sustained, and which they supposed he had fully proved by the great works wrought by him, and the demonstrations of wonderful knowledge.

Simon Peter's confession before taken notice of, for which he was so much applauded, as recorded in Matt. xvi. 16, is: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." That this confession implies an acknowledgment of his Master's being the Messiah, the great person who was to come, according to the predictions of the prophets, is manifest from the sequel. For hereupon, our Lord not judging it prudent that the disciples should as yet, with all their prejudices about them, declare that character every where: "charged them that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ," ver. 20; with which agrees the account in Mark viii. 29, 30. "But whom say ye that I am? and Peter answered, and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him:" that is, that they should not publish that their persuasion concerning him to others. To the like purpose in Luke ix. 20, 21. "He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering, said, The Christ of God. And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing."

Persons possessed by dæmons likewise bore their testimony to Jesus, that he was the Son of God, plainly intending thereby, that he was the Christ. Luke iv. 41. "And dæmons came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them, suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was the Christ." The same must be the meaning of all others who make the same confession.

All these persons, then, when they confessed Jesus to be the Son of God, meant no more than that he was the Christ. And if this be the meaning of the phrase in the gospels, it is likely to be the meaning of it in the epistles.

But by the Christ, or Messiah, the Jewish people meant a man, who had the Spirit without measure, or in a greater measure than any of the prophets: a man, endowed from above with power, wisdom and understanding superior to all others, knowing the whole will of God, and appointed by the Father to reveal it, and capable of accomplishing all the great designs for which he should be sent.

II. I am now to shew in the second place the design of this message of Christ to his disciples, and in what sense God is also their and our God and Father. "Go to my disciples, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

1. The meaning of these words is this: 'I am now about to leave this earth, and am going 'to heaven, the place of the more especial presence and residence of God, and where are the 'brightest manifestations of his glory.' This, I say, appears to be the obvious and direct sense of the words, that Jesus was now shortly to ascend to the blessed abode, the regions of the heavenly world.

2. Our Lord intends by this message to his disciples, to carry their thoughts to the things of another world, even to things spiritual and heavenly.

Upon our Lord's revival, and coming again among them, their fond expectations of a kingdom in this world might again take place. But our Lord, before he shews himself to them (as he necessarily must do to give them evidences of his resurrection) desires to prevent such low conceptions and false imaginations.

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Whither he went, or was to go, was a question that had been often started in the course of his ministry: and it was a tender and affecting point. If he had left Judea, provided he would have set up a kingdom and government full of splendour, ease and riches, men would have followed him, though to the greatest distance. To have left the land of Israel, to go and teach Gentiles, and Jews dispersed among Gentiles, in the same way that he had taught men in Judea, would have been offensive and disagreeable to many. But for him, who took upon himself the character of the Messiah, to speak of leaving this earth, and be no longer visible here, was exceeding discouraging; for it overthrew all hopes of a life in worldly ease and prosperity under him; which had been the expectation of carnal minds.

Let us observe the passages of St. John's gospel, where this enquiry appears; and we shall find, that our Lord himself gave occasion to it, and endeavoured by what he said of his going away, to destroy that expectation which was so prejudicial to just sentiments concerning himself and the things of religion.

John vii. 32—36. "The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him: and the Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them: Yet a little while I am with you: and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said: Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?"

And ch. viii. 20—23. "These things spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple —Then said Jesus again unto them: I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go ye cannot come.—And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath. I am from above. Ye are of this world. I am not of this world."

Ch. xiii. 33. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me. And as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come: so now say I unto you."—Ver. 36. "Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards."

Ch. xiv. 1—6. "Let not your hearts be troubled.—In my Father's house are many mansions. —I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also: and whither I go, ye know: and the way you know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest: and how can we know the way?" Such was their remaining ignorance, occasioned by the prejudices which they laboured under. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life:" and what there follows.

Once more, ch. xvi. 5, 6. "But now I go my way unto him that sent me: and none of you asketh me, whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." They had sometimes before put that question to him. But they did not yet fully comprehend his answers. And it would have been agreeable to him, if they had now given him occasion to speak again of the place whither he was going; especially if they had by their inquiries manifested an increase of knowledge, and a growing esteem and affection for heavenly things.

This message therefore our Lord sends to his disciples immediately after his resurrection, before he shewed himself personally to any of them. 'I am indeed risen from the dead. I who 'was dead, am alive again. But let not therefore any fond thoughts arise in the minds of any of 'you. I am soon to leave this world, and go to him that sent me, as I often told you formerly. '"I ascend to my Father, and your Father: to my God, and your God."'

This message was altogether worthy of our Lord. And it was exceedingly suited to produce a serious and attentive frame in the minds of his disciples, and to carry their thoughts from the things of this world, however engaging to those of another.

3. Our blessed Lord intended by this message to comfort and strengthen his disciples by assurances of a like glory and happiness with what was allotted to himself.

"I go to my Father," says he, "and to your Father, to my God, and your God." 'I am 'raised up to life. So likewise shall all they be in due time who believe in me, and follow, and 'obey me. To all such the Father will by me give eternal life.'

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Our Lord proved a resurrection to the Pharisees from God's having called himself "the God of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob."

Our Lord had been now declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection. Herein God had shewn himself a Father to him. He here says to his disciples, that God is not only his God and Father, but theirs also. Thereby he assures them of a resurrection to life, to die no more, and of their partaking of glory and happiness like his. Then their sonship, and God's fatherly love and care for them, will be manifest. So says our Lord. "Neither can they die any more. For they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection," Luke xx. 36.

Whilst our Lord was yet with the disciples, and before he took his leave of them, he said: "I go to prepare a place for you. If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself: that where I am, there ye may be also," John xiv. 2, 3; and afterwards, ver. 19. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Thus we see at once how God is not only the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but also how he is the God and Father of his disciples and people. He is the Son of God, and God is his Father, in a sense peculiar to himself. He is their elder brother, and the first-born from the dead, and has in all things the pre-eminence. They likewise are dear to God, as children: they have been born of God, they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. And they have an inheritance. It is in the heavenly mansions of their Father's house with Christ, who is their head and Lord.

4. In this message to the disciples our Lord might intend to encourage their expectation of the fulfilment of the promise of the gift of the Spirit, to enlighten them, and qualify them for the difficult work to which he had called and appointed them: a thing which he had often spoken of, especially when he discoursed of his leaving them. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is expedient that I go away: for if I go not away the Comforter will not come. But if I depart I will send him unto you," John xvi. 7, 8.

Application. I shall add a thought or two by way of reflection.

Admirable are the condescension and the goodness of the Lord Jesus. "Go to my brethren, and say unto them: I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God.

Jesus is risen from the dead to die no more. He nevertheless calls his disciples, as yet in a state of affliction and trial, brethren. They had accompanied him in his temptation. And he still calls them brethren. We therefore need not scruple to esteem and call them our brethren, who in some respects are inferior to us.

The goodness of Jesus is also very admirable. The disciples had lately failed in their regard to him, and left him alone in his hour of disgrace. Nevertheless, when risen from the dead, and death had no longer any power over him, nor are any of the afflictions of this life able to reach him, he sends them this message full of affection and tenderness. It is not a threatening, it is not an upbraiding message, but encouraging and cheering.

We should not abuse his goodness. But if we are sincere, let us hope that Jesus, who knows all things, will not reject us for unallowed failings and neglects.

And let us also be willing to own others for our brethren, who are not perfect, but are defective, and fail, though sincere, in an hour of temptation: and let us do what we can to strengthen and comfort them.

SERMON XXVI.

CHRIST'S POVERTY OUR RICHES.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. 2 Cor. viii. 9.

These words lie among divers arguments, which the apostle offers to the Corinthians, to induce them to a liberal contribution for the relief of the poor saints in Judea. And these words may be considered as containing an argument to generosity therein. Or, whilst they contain indeed

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a very powerful motive to liberality, and to every good work, they may be considered as exhibiting to these Christians a reason why the apostle need not press their liberality to the utmost, by the use of many arguments, they being already acquainted with a very forcible inducement. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

However, it is not my design at this time to consider the words, particularly with regard to their connection, or to excite your liberality to any contribution. I now treat of them, as a remarkable and distinguished part of the portion of scripture read this morning in our ordinary course, and as likely to furnish meditations suitable to the solemnity of the Lord's supper to be this day administered among us.

In the words are several things observable.

I. The riches of Christ.

II. His poverty.

III. The moving cause and consideration of his "becoming poor," which was our benefit: or "that by his poverty we might be rich."

IV. How Christ's poverty conduces to our riches.

V. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in becoming poor, that we might be rich."

I. In the first place we are to observe the riches of Christ. Hereby is meant the great dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the mighty power which he was possessed of, and his command over all things. In a text very parallel with this the apostle speaks of Christ being "in the form of God," Philip. ii. 6. In another place he says, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9; that is, really; not as in the temple of old at Jerusalem, in a bright flame, or resplendent glory, a visible outward symbol of the divine presence. But in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Deity really. He has divine knowledge, wisdom and power. In Matt. i. 23, is applied to Jesus the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the birth of a child, of whom it was foretold: "they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us." And St. John at the beginning of his gospel says: "The Word was made flesh," or took human nature, "and dwelled among us. And we saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

This is great riches. Let us also observe some of the proofs hereof. They are very evident in the life of Jesus. In him appeared the knowledge of all things, of the thoughts and designs of men, things done formerly, in private, and things future. He had likewise all power for healing diseases, raising the dead, and for restraining his enemies when he saw fit. He commanded the winds and the waves, and they obeyed him. He multiplied small provisions for the supply of great multitudes: and he spake as man never spake, with perspicuity and true sublimity, to the admiration of the people, to the conviction of some of his enemies, and the surprise of others of them.

II. The next particular is our Lord's poverty. "He became poor." In this expression two things are implied: first that he was poor, and then, that he was so willingly, and with his own consent.

First, Jesus Christ was poor. Hereby is meant by the apostle not only the being destitute of a large patrimony, or plentiful income, and many accommodations, but all the mean circumstances of our Lord's outward condition.

However, he was poor in the literal sense of the word. He descended from the family of David, when it was in a low estate; and when he appeared in his public character, he had no settled habitation of his own. When one of the Jewish scribes came to him, making an offer to follow him whithersoever he went, our Lord recommended to him to consider the consequence of such a resolution; for, says he, "the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," Matt. viii. 20. There are many evidences of our Lord's poverty; for he subsisted chiefly by the contributions of a few zealous friends and followers. When they came to him for the tribute-money, or the annual offering for the use of the temple at Jerusalem, he seems not to have had of his own wherewith to pay it; and therefore rather than give offence by not paying it, he wrought a miracle for a supply.

But by the poverty mentioned in the text, we are farther to understand all the many sufferings and inconveniences to which our Lord was exposed in this world, as a person in mean circumstances: the ingratitude of some, whom he had obliged by very valuable benefits, the neglect of many, who pay regard not to merit, but to wealth and outward show and appear-

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ance; the scorn of the great and powerful, the frequent contradictions and continual oppositions which he met with from the scribes and pharisees, and the chief priests, and the rulers, and all the pain and ignominy of his death.

That all this may be justly understood to be comprised in this expression of the text, may be concluded from the parallel place before referred to. "Who being in the form of God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant:——and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Philip. ii. 6—8.

Secondly, All this poverty was free and voluntary. Though he was rich, "for your sakes he became poor:" or, in the words just cited, "he made himself of no reputation."

That our Lord's poverty, and all the inconveniences attending it, and all the sufferings he underwent, as a man, mean, and despised of the people, were freely submitted to, is apparent. When he wrought a miracle for the sake of the tribute-money, he carried it no farther than an immediate supply for that one particular exigence; though he therein showed a command over all nature. The two miracles of the loaves, when he multiplied small provisions, are another clear demonstration that he could have abounded in all good things if he had pleased. How he declined all worldly power and splendour, is evident from his shunning, and disappointing those who would have had him assume regal state and authority. "When Jesus therefore perceived," says the Evangelist, "that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone," John vi. 18. And when, for the good of his disciples, he spake to them beforehand of his last sufferings, and Peter said, "Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee," Matt. xvi. 22, he repressed that apostle, as a seducer and tempter, with marks of great displeasure and resentment. "He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men," ver. 23. And when those sufferings were near at hand, and Peter began to make resistance, that he might not be apprehended by the Jewish officers, he said unto him: "The cup, which my Father has given me to drink, shall I not drink it?" John xviii. 11. And, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he should presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Matt. xxvi. 53.

That is the second thing, Christ's poverty, and the cheerfulness with which he submitted to it, and to all the inconveniences attending it.

III. The next thing observable in the words of the text is the moving cause of it, or the end aimed at and proposed in this poverty, which is our benefit, that we might be rich.

I need not say, that hereby is not particularly intended earthly riches: that the persons, to whom St. Paul is writing, or others, followers of Jesus, might have a great deal of wealth, or large estates, and worldly pomp and honour. There is no reason to doubt, that usually, or however very frequently, good Christians may have an equal share of worldly good things with other men, by the practice of the virtues of sobriety, diligence, prudence and moderation, which his doctrine recommends: nevertheless that is not what is here particularly intended, but somewhat higher. Any thing that is valuable may be represented by riches, for which men ordinarily have a great esteem. This language is common in profane authors of the best note, as well as in the sacred writings. They who are wise, whatever is their outward condition, are reckoned rich in some sense by the judicious. In the figurative stile of Solomon, in the book of Proverbs, Wisdom there says: "Riches and honour are with me, yea durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance: and I will fill their treasures," Prov. viii. 18, 19.

It is in this sublime and exalted sense, that the apostle ought to be here understood, when he says, "for your sakes Christ became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." For this is agreeable to his stile in other places. So he says to the Corinthians, "I thank my God always in your behalf, that in every thing ye are enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge," 1 Cor. i. 4, 5. In like manner in the seventh verse of this chapter, wherein is the text: "Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, and in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also."

There are several branches of this kind of riches, with which Christians are enriched by Jesus Christ, and which he proposed to enrich them with. There are riches of knowledge and

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understanding in divine things, riches of virtue and holiness, riches of good works, riches of inheritance, riches of comfort, and riches of future glory and happiness.

First, there are the riches of knowledge and understanding in divine things. This is a fundamental blessing, on which many others depend. "In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 3. From his fulness Christians have received. They gain by him a clearer knowledge of God, and the way of serving him, and approving themselves to him, than others have, or than they had, before they had heard of him and learned of him. Says the apostle to the Galatians: "But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements?" Gal. iv. 9. They have juster notions of the future state of recompenses, than others. Through Christ, these Corinthians, and other Gentiles, had gained a clearer and more delightful knowledge, and fuller assurances concerning the wisdom, goodness and mercy of God, and many other religious truths, than they had before.

Secondly, There are also the riches of graces or virtues, the truest riches in the world, and the most valuable of all attainments. Such as the love of God and our neighbour, moderation for earthly things, meekness, patience, gentleness, long-suffering, the government of ourselves and all our passions. To have these virtuous dispositions, especially to excel in them, is great riches. St. James speaks of some, who were "rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to them that love him," Jam. ii. 5. Christ has become poor, and has given himself for us, that we might have these riches of virtue and holiness, and that we might abound therein, excelling in love, meekness, patience, zeal, and fortitude of mind in the profession of truth, and the practice of virtue.

Farther, thirdly, There are the riches of good works, when the virtuous dispositions, just mentioned, are exercised, and show themselves in their proper fruits. St. Paul requires Timothy to "charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate," 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. He himself is here exhorting the Corinthians to be rich in that way. And at the beginning of this chapter he commends the churches of Macedonia for the riches of their liberality.

4. There are also the riches of inheritance, or expectation. And Christ became poor for this end, that we might be entitled to a glorious and heavenly inheritance. Though Gentiles, once afar off, we through Christ have been brought nigh unto God, and admitted into his family, and made children. "And if children, then heirs," says St. Paul, "and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. And St. James: "Has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to them that love him?" Jam. ii. 5. So Christians are rich in hope and expectation.

5. Consequently, they are likely to be rich in comforts. Since their expectations are vast, and also well founded, they have sources of consolation which cannot easily fail. In every condition, whether they want, or abound, as to earthly goods, they will enjoy contentment, and in all their tribulations have peace and comfort. As St. Paul says: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access into this grace—and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also," Rom. v. beg. especially when they happen on account of services for the interest of true religion: "knowing, that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us."

6. The riches, which the apostle here speaks of, must include also the riches of future glory and happiness. And that is true riches, a treasure laid up in heaven, liable to no violence, nor accidents, nor decays. They, who according to the directions of Christ, and his apostles, seek the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness in the first place, who rightly improve their present advantages, doing good, and being rich in good works, lay up for themselves in store a good foundation," or a good treasure, "against the time to come, and will obtain eternal life." 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

Thus Christ "became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," in religious knowledge, in virtue, in good works, in the hope and expectation of a heavenly inheritance, in contentment, peace and comfort of mind now, and at length in glory, the perfection of holiness and happiness.

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IV. It may be now fitly inquired by us: how does Christ's poverty conduce to our riches? It does so many ways.

For by Christ's living in this world in a mean condition we have better assurance of the reality of his miraculous works, and consequently of the truth of his doctrine, than otherwise we should have had. The evidence of them is now much more clear and credible, than it would have been if he had lived in splendour, and had enjoyed external power and authority. For in that case it might have been suspected, that some were disposed to ascribe great works to him without sufficient ground and reason. But now there is no pretence for such a suspicion.

As a teacher of the principles of true religion, a low and mean condition was on many accounts preferable, and more likely to subserve the great ends which he had in view. And therefore he submitted to it, and even chose it.

Hereby he has been a pattern of all virtues, especially the most difficult. In a word, he has given an example of virtue, suited to the afflicted, tempted state and condition which we are in.

They of low rank are a large part of mankind. He has set a pattern of the virtues suited to their condition—meekness, patience, resignation to the will of God, trust in Divine Providence. Hereby also men of higher rank are instructed to be thankful and useful in their stations. Moreover moderation for all earthly things is a disposition necessary even for the richest and the greatest. And they ought to be prepared for poverty, and every kind of abasement: forasmuch as no condition in this world is set above a liableness to the most surprising changes and vicissitudes.

V. One thing more, which we are led to observe, is "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ:" his goodness, his benevolence, his munificence in "becoming poor," that others "might be rich."

Ye know this, says the apostle. The Corinthians, and other Christians at that time, had been acquainted with it by those who had preached the gospel to them. We know it likewise from the history of our Lord's life, recorded in the gospels, and from the enlargements upon the subject of the love of Christ, which we find in the epistles of his apostles.

We may know it also by the conviction we have of the great difference between wealth and poverty, the advantages of the one, and the disadvantages and inconveniences of the other; the respect and homage paid to the one, the contempt and neglect which are often the portion of the other. We know it by observing how seldom respect and esteem can be secured by the most exalted virtue, and the most useful services of men of low condition. And we see what opposition our Lord met with, what contradictions he endured in the course of his ministry; which might have been prevented if he had been in power and authority: if he had not chosen to be in this world, and among his disciples, as one that serveth, and to maintain this character to the end, and lay down his life for his sheep, even those of the people of Israel, and for those who were not of that fold, but were afar off among the Gentiles.

VI. Application. Let me now add a word or two by way of application.

1. We are all here furnished with a powerful motive to condescension, meekness, forbearance, and every virtue, conducive to the welfare of our fellow creatures. "We know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." We need not therefore to have frequent and earnest admonitions to works of kindness. We have always at hand a consideration that may make us ready of ourselves to every good work, as occasions offer.

2. Let then every rational, every unprejudiced, and well-disposed mind, give honour and praise to the Lord Jesus Christ. What, and who is he, to whom Jesus does not appear amiable in his words, in his works, and in the whole of his conduct? Is generosity amiable in others? Why not in Jesus, who has given the most extraordinary and unexceptionable proofs of that great virtue?

By his grace in becoming poor, we have been made rich. For to what else; or to whom, so much as to him, do we owe our just sentiments in religion; or any measure of virtue which we have attained? To whom are we so much indebted as to him, for the comfort of our minds, for support under afflictions, and for a well grounded hope of eternal life?

We may owe something to reason. We also owe a great deal to revelation, especially to the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which he taught in a mean condition, and confirmed by his willing and patient death. We are indebted to the faith of Abraham, the self-denial of Moses, and to all the noble exploits of others, who have been animated by the principles of true

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religion. We are indebted to the devout and elegant compositions of King David, and the wise observations of his son Solomon, who also was king in Jerusalem, and long reigned in great splendour. But we owe a great deal more to Jesus Christ, who was crucified, and afterwards rose from the dead.

When all the maxims of mere philosophy never proceeded so far as to make one province or city of philosophers: when the law of Moses, with a magnificent temple, and a well endowed priesthood, could scarcely keep one single nation steady in the worship of the true God, or from falling into all the abominations of the grossest idolatry; in a short time after the preaching of the cross of Christ, multitudes of people turned from idols to serve the living and true God: and many societies of men, professing the principles of true religion, were formed and planted in distant parts of the world: till many of the kingdoms of the earth became the kingdoms of our God, and his Christ.

Some have been apt to raise disputes concerning the powers and interests of reason and revelation, which might have been reconciled. Applicable here seems to be the wise answer, which our Lord gave to an ensnaring question. "Render," says he, "to Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things which are God's." In like manner, render to reason the things that are reason's, and to revelation the things that belong to it.

That it is very much owing to revelation, that true religion has been kept up in the world, appears from the deplorable ignorance of those who have not had that advantage. How much we owe to the Christian revelation, may be concluded from the swift progress of the principles of true religion, upon the preaching of Christ's apostles. "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" that is, does not all that wisdom now appear very contemptible, as to its influence, when compared with the effect of the preaching of the gospel of Christ? Indeed, it is he to whom we are indebted for all this riches. By the preaching of his gospel we have been brought to the knowledge of the law and the prophets, and have learned the right exercise of our reason.

SERMON XXVII.

CHRIST'S FAREWELL WISH OF PEACE TO HIS DISCIPLES.

Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives, give I unto you.—John xiv. 27.

THE text contains our Lord's valedictory blessing, which he leaves with his disciples. And I now consider it as preparatory to a discourse on the apostolical benediction at the end of the second epistle to the Corinthians; hoping that an explication of this text may lead us to the right meaning of the other.

I. I shall first show, how we are to understand these words: "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you."

II. And then, wherein Christ's peace exceeds and surpasses "the peace which the world gives."

I. I would endeavour to show, how we are to understand these words: "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you."

The word "peace" is used in various senses. A very common meaning of the word in our language, and often found likewise in scripture, is that of general quiet and tranquillity, in opposition to public war; or for private friendship and agreement, in opposition to strife and contention among particular persons. "There is," says Solomon, "a time of peace, and a time of war," Ecc. iii. 8. "He maketh peace in thy borders," Ps. cxlvii. 14. Where it denotes public and general quiet and tranquillity. In many other places it signifies private friendship and agreement, in opposition to strife and contention. Our Lord directs his disciples:

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"Have peace one with another," Mark ix. 50. And St. Paul says, 2 Cor. xii. 11. "Be of one mind, live in peace." And Rom. xii. 18. "If it be possible, as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men."

Peace is sometimes equivalent to comfort and satisfaction of mind. Isa. xxvi. 3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee." Luke ii. 29. "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." So the word seems to be taken, Ps. cxix. 65. "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Prov. iii. 17. It is said of wisdom or religion: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." John xvi. 33. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye will have tribulation." Rom. xv. 13. "Now the God of peace fill you with all joy and peace," or all comfort and satisfaction of mind, "in believing."

In the eastern languages peace is oftentimes the same as happiness or prosperity. Ps. cxxii. 6, 7. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." And when the Jews were going captives into Babylon, they were required to pray for the peace of the city where they dwelt. By which undoubtedly is to be understood prosperity in general: not only tranquillity, or freedom from foreign wars, and intestine seditions and commotions, but likewise plenty of all good things, and freedom from calamitous circumstances of every kind. Isa. xlviii. 18. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments. Then had thy peace been as a river;" that is, then thy wealth and prosperity would have been very great and remarkable.

This being a common sense of the word among the eastern people, wishing peace was a very usual form of salutation with them. In this manner David sent his salutations or compliments to Nabal, by his servants: "Thus shall ye say to him, Peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy house, and peace be unto all that thou hast," 1 Sam. xxv. 6. It is said of Joseph's brethren, that "they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him," Gen. xxxvii. 4. In the original it is: "they could not say peace to him:" that is, when they met him, they could not persuade themselves to salute him, or say, "peace be unto thee." Such grudging and envy were in their minds. This form of salutation was used by superiors to inferiors, and likewise by inferiors to the greatest. Ezra iv. 17. "Then sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and to Shimshi, the scribe,——and to the rest of their companions beyond the river, ——Peace: and at such a time." And Ezra v. 7. "The copy of the letter of Tatnai the governor, on this side the river——They sent a letter to Darius the king, wherein it was written: Unto Darius the king: all peace."

God himself is represented as adopting this manner of expression. Jer. xvi. 5. "For I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the Lord, even loving-kindness and mercies." As if he had said: 'I now withdraw from you my blessing, and no longer concern myself for your 'welfare and prosperity.'

I may add here a few other instances. Our Lord directs his disciples: "And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house," Luke x. 5. Our Lord himself, when he came again among his disciples, after his resurrection, saluted them in the like manner. "The same day at evening came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you," John xx. 19.

Such then was the common form of salutation. The farewell wish at parting was much the same. "Then Eli said unto Hannah, Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him," 1 Sam. i. 17. So the prophet Elisha says to Naaman, "Go in peace," 2 Kings v. 19.

It may be here observed, that sometimes the same expression is used by way of farewell, as in the salutation. St. Peter concludes his first epistle: "Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. So it is in our translation: but in the original it is exactly thus: "Peace to you all that are in Christ Jesus." Ειρηνη υμιν πασι κ. λ. And St. Paul near the conclusion of his epistle to the Ephesians, ch. vi. 23. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

However, by comparing the salutations at the beginning, and the valedictions at the end of the epistles, in the New Testament, we seem to learn that it was common to begin with praying that grace and mercy might be to persons; and to conclude with a wish, that the same blessings might be with them; meaning thereby, as I apprehend that they might remain and

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abide with them. So Philip. i. 2; the salutation is, "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." The concluding wish or farewell, ch. iv. 23, is: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." And Col. i. 2. "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." The valediction at the end of the epistle is, "Grace be with you."

Complying with the common forms, our Lord here gives his blessing to the disciples in a like manner, and says, "Peace I leave with you." 'I wish you all happiness. I leave and 'bequeath it to you: and remember, it is my valedictory blessing.' "My peace I give unto you." 'Nor do I only wish, but I actually give and impart happiness to you, provided you 'are desirous of it, and careful to obtain it.' Or, he[a] repeats the same wish, as we sometimes do at parting, saying, "Farewell, farewell:" or, "again and again I wish you all happiness."

II. Which brings us to the other point to be considered by us: wherein Christ's peace exceeds and surpasses the peace which the world gives.

It may imply these several things. Christ's wish of peace is more sincere, more fervent, more valuable, and more effectual, than that of the world.

1. Christ's wish of peace is more sincere.

Men's wishes of happiness are sometimes formal only, an empty sound, mere words, and nothing else: a compliment performed out of regard to custom and fashion, without any real love, or true desire of the welfare of those who are favoured with it. In this respect, Christ's peace exceeded that of the world. His farewell wish was not without thought and meaning. He was not unconcerned about the welfare of his disciples. Their happiness was not a thing indifferent to him. He truly loved them, and wished them well. As St. John observes at the beginning of the thirteenth chapter of his gospel: "Having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them to the end." He was continually giving them marks of affection for their welfare: and at this time he was sincere as ever.

2. Christ's wish of peace exceeds that of the world in the fervour and earnestness, as well as in the truth and sincerity of it.

It was not a cold and faint desire of their happiness, but most fervent and earnest. Otherwise he had not now concerned himself about his disciples, when he was so near a time of bitter sufferings.

Indeed Christ's love was very general and extensive. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. He gave himself for "the life of the world," John vi. 51. In his difficult and important undertaking, and every part of it, he had an eye to the recovery and salvation of all, even of all such as were in darkness and ignorance, sin and misery. And certainly that love is very great and extraordinary, which produces such effects, and carries through the sorrows of a painful and ignominious death.

In this general and fervent love the disciples had their share. He gave himself for them, as well as for others. But we may suppose, that in the days of his flesh, during his abode on this earth, he had an especial affection and tenderness for those whom he had called to be with him, and who had hearkened to that call. Before he gave them that call, they believed in him, and were disciples in general, and had a respect for him as the expected Messiah. Such an idea they formed of him, founded upon the preaching of John the Baptist, and some discourses with himself, compared with the prophecies of the ancient scriptures.

And now they had been with him a year or two, during the time of his public ministry. They persevered in their faith and profession, and attendance on him, notwithstanding the reflections cast upon him, and upon them for his sake. They were not free from defects and failings, which his all-discerning eye observed, and which he kindly took notice of to them. But they had shewn a sincere affection and respect for him, and an ardour for his honour and service, which were very acceptable.

They were become more especially his charge, and were as his family. As such he is now retired with them, and has friendly and intimate conversation with them. And he takes his leave of them, as a parent does of his children, a little before his expected departure out of this

[a] Bis autem eundem sensum repetit, sicut dicere solemus: Vale, Vale. Grot. in loc.

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world: or as some person of eminent station and character, may do of his friends and dependents, or others, whom he has treated with special regard.

3. There is still another very remarkable difference to be observed by us. Christ's peace surpasseth that of the world in real excellence and value.

His wish of peace is not only sincere and fervent, but also wise and judicious, not weak, and fond, or partial.

What was the peace, which our Lord now gave, and left with his disciples, we may clearly discern from the tenour of all his exhortations and teachings, public and private. He does not wish them the great things of this world, abundance of riches, honour and splendour: these are not the things which he wishes for them chiefly, and in the first place. He continually cautioned men against setting their affections upon such things, and seeking them as their main happiness. Undoubtedly, he wishes, that his friends and followers may fare well, and meet with a kind and friendly reception among men, and obtain other advantages and comforts, so far as they can be secured in the way of integrity and strict virtue, and without abating the ardour of their zeal for the honour of God, and the interest of true religion, in all its branches. But he first of all desires, that they may do well, and in the next place only, that they may fare well.

In this respect the peace of Christ differs very much from the peace of the world, and the men of it. The peace, which they usually wish for those whom they love best, is made up of all the ingredients of a worldly felicity. They set a great value upon such things themselves. And therefore, when their love of others is sincere and warm, they are very apt earnestly to desire abundance of worldly goods for them.

But that is not true wisdom. Solomon said of old: "Fear God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole" duty and interest "of man," Eccl. xii. 13. Our Lord proceeds upon the same plan, only farther improved. As he says in this context, ver. 21. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father. And I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." His precepts are very sublime and spiritual, requiring purity of heart and life. His blessings and promises are suitable, even heavenly and eternal. And the desires and pursuits of his disciples and followers should be answerable. "My sheep hear my voice. And I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands," John x. 27, 28.

This blessing our Lord now gives to his disciples. This peace he leaves with them, and wishes, and recommends it to them to take care that they fail not of it, and fall not short of the everlasting rest which remains for God's people. And if they act thus, all other things needful and convenient will be added.

Then they will have peace with God. God will not be an enemy to them, but will love and approve of them. And they will have a comfortable persuasion of his favour and acceptance. If they seek the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness, in the first place, they will never contract such friendship with this world, as would produce enmity with God.

Then they will have peace in their own minds. They will not easily do any thing, for which their own hearts should afterwards reproach them: but will so act, as to enjoy a happy serenity and composure of mind.

They will be also free from tormenting, ambitious pursuits of the great things of this world; and will have satisfaction and contentment in every condition.

Says our Lord: "And ye now therefore have sorrow. But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice. And your joy no man taketh from you," John xvi. 22. This is a great advantage of the peace of religion, the peace which our Lord gives, that it is durable. It is not to be broken in upon, and carried away, by every flood of affliction. It is not fleeting and inconstant, like worldly peace and joy, depending upon advantages, passing and fading. But it resembles the rock upon which it is built, the hope of everlasting life, which God has promised to them that love him, and keep his commandments. The earnest desire and steady pursuit of that, above all things else, must produce great and constant peace. For whatever we lose, this great blessing is sure, if we do not forfeit it by wilful disobedience and transgression.

This is a blessed peace. St. Paul speaks of the peace of God, as "passing all understanding," Philip. iv. 7. It includes advantages, not easy to be apprehended by such as have had no experience of it.

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There is a passage of a gentile philosopher, who lived in the Roman empire, soon after the rise of the Christian religion, whose study, as is supposed, was not so much the contemplation of the works of nature, as the rules of virtue, and who aimed to cultivate the manners of men. 'You perceive, says he, that the emperor gives you great peace, inasmuch as there are no 'longer wars, and fightings, robberies and piracies, and you may travel safely from the east to 'the west. But can he give you peace from fevers, from shipwreck, from fire, from earthquakes, 'from thunder? Can he give you peace from ambition? No, he cannot. From grief? No, 'he cannot. From envy? No, not from any such things. But the doctrine of the philosophers 'promise you peace from these also. And what says it? O ye men, if ye will hearken to me, 'then wherever you are, and whatever you are doing, you shall not be sad, you shall not be 'angry, you shall be free from tumultuous passions. He who has this peace, not proclaimed by 'Cæsar, (for how should he proclaim such peace?) but proclaimed by God, according to 'reason; he, I say, who has this peace, is he not happy? Has he not wherewith he may be 'satisfied?'

So that Greek philosopher. And indeed this is great peace: to suffer afflictions, and not to be depressed by them: to meet with provocations and injuries, and not to be angry: to behold others preferred and advanced before us, and above us, and to be free from envy: to observe the practices of the crafty and designing, and not to admit within our breasts vexatious and tormenting jealousy: to live in a world, where some things are desirable, others grievous: and to be free from uneasy and tumultuous affections: not too much desiring the one, nor too much fearing and dreading the other.

This is great peace. Nor is there any so likely to give it as Christ.

4. Which brings us to the fourth particular: Christ's peace, or wish of peace and happiness, excels the peace of the world, as being more effectual.

He was to be soon parted from his disciples by death. But he would see them again. And if he lived, they should live also. John xiv. 19.

His doctrine, his life, his death, his resurrection and exaltation, tended mightily to confirm the faith and hope of eternal life; which would engage their affections for things heavenly, and take them off from things sensible and temporal: and thereby lay a foundation for peace and comfort, amidst all the vicissitudes of the present condition. And all they who believe in Jesus, and attend to his doctrine and example, have like advantages with those who conversed personally with him.

III. Application. I now conclude with a few reflections by way of application.

1. We may here observe, that our blessed Lord is great and admirable every where, and upon all occasions. We discern his most excellent temper and conduct in private and in public, with his disciples, and when retired from the world, as well as at other seasons.

2. Our Lord's conduct here, as well as upon other occasions, deserves our attention, and imitation.

Being about to be removed from his disciples by death, he takes leave of them in an affectionate manner. He gives them a valedictory blessing: or leaves with them a legacy and present of peace. Conceive it either way, it makes no great difference. Nor let us be concerned about imitating him in form only. Let our peace, as his did, exceed that of the world. Let our peace, our wishes of happiness to others, be more sincere, more fervent, more valuable, and more effectual, than that of most men. Especially let us attend to the third property, more valuable and important. Let us be above all things desirous, that they, whom we love in the flesh, may seek heavenly things in the first place. And if we set them an example of moderation for earthly things, as our Lord did, and at the same time are concerned for their temporal welfare, as for our own, and practise frugality, diligence and application: this will be the way to render our wishes for those who are dear to us, advantageous and effectual. Hereby we shall leave, and give to them that peace, which we wish and desire may be their portion: provided they do their part, and are not wanting to themselves.

3. Lastly, Let us each one reflect upon ourselves. Have we that peace, which Christ gave to his disciples? If not, let us inquire what is the reason of it: for, as our Lord said to his disciples, when they wished peace or prosperity to any house into which they entered, "if the

* Arrian. Epict. l. 3. cap. 13.

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son of peace be there, their peace should rest upon it," Luke x. 5, 6. In like manner, if we are true disciples of Jesus, if we love him, and keep his commandments, "his peace will rest upon us." But if we are not humble: if we are not meek and self-denying, as he has required us to be: if we are proud and aspiring: if our prevailing aims and desires are selfish and worldly, without any fruits of generous love: we are not sons of peace, or Christ's disciples; nor does his peace belong unto us.

However, having once found where our fault or defect lies, let us be willing and careful to amend it. So wrath shall not abide upon us, but we may become sons of peace. We shall then enjoy comfort and peace of mind now, and hereafter enter into that undisturbed and everlasting rest and peace, which remain for all the people of God, of all places, and of all times. Amen.

SERMON XXVIII.

THE APOSTOLICAL BENEDICTION.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.—2 Cor. xiii. 14.

I AM not insensible of the difficulty of the subject, and that, possibly, what shall be proposed may not be satisfactory to all. I have been desirous, nevertheless, to explain this apostolical benediction; which is very often, though not always and constantly, made use of in our assemblies, at the conclusion of our solemn and public worship.

As every word in it may require distinct observation, so there may be reckoned to be some special difficulty in settling the precise meaning of the last phrase, "the communion of the Holy Ghost:" which is not found at the conclusion of any other of the epistles in the New Testament. And it is questioned by some, whether it does not intend those miraculous gifts which were then common, but were peculiar to the early ages of Christianity, and have for a long time ceased in the church. If that be the direct, and the sole and only meaning of the expression; then it will be argued, that this benediction, in all its fulness, cannot be fitly used in our assemblies in these times. For it is not reasonable to ask for ourselves, nor to wish and pray for others, such things, as we have no ground to hope for, and which the circumstances of things in the world declare and manifest, that it is not the good will and pleasure of God to bestow. As this is a main difficulty in the words, we should have a particular eye to it.

In order the better to conceive distinctly of this matter, I shall mention these several following propositions.

I. It will be of use to compare this with the farewell, or valedictory wishes and benedictions at the end of the other epistles of the apostles.

I begin with those in the two epistles to the Thessalonians, which seem to be the first written epistles of St. Paul, and the most early scriptures of the New Testament.

1 Thess. v. 28. "The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all." 2 Thess. iii. 17, 18. "The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is the token in all my epistles. So I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

And exactly the same in Rom. xvi. 24. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." And before in ch. xv. 13, he had said: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing." And ver. 33. "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." And ch. xvi. 20. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

1 Cor. xvi. 23, 24. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen."

Gal. vi. 18. "Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit."

Eph. vi. 23, 24. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father, and

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the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

Philip. iv. 23. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Col. iv. 18. "The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen."

1 Tim. vi. 21. "Grace be with thee. Amen."

2 Tim. iv. 22. "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen."

Tit. iii. 15. "All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen."

Philem. ver. 25. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

Heb. xiii. 25. "Grace be with you all. Amen."

In the epistle of St. James there is nothing very solemn, either at the beginning, or at the end. What he says at the beginning is this: "To the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad, greeting."

1 Pet. v. 13, 14. "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you, and so doth Marcus my son. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen."

There is no salutation at the end of the second epistle of St. Peter.

St. John's third epistle concludes thus: "Peace be to thee. The brethren salute thee. Greet the friends by name."

Rev. xxii. 21. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

These are the conclusions, or the valedictory blessings, of the several epistles of the New Testament. Whereby we perceive, that none is more frequent, than that of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." Sometimes it is shorter: "Grace be with you all." Or "the God of peace be with you:" or peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus.

II. It may be of use to compare the valedictions at the end with the salutations which are at the beginning of the apostolical epistles.

For a valediction, or farewell, is nothing else but a salutation at parting. The chief difference seems to be in the form, without much difference in the meaning. At meeting it usually is: "peace be to you." At parting: "peace be with you," or abide with you. Another small difference may be observed. The wish at the end is more summary. Or, perhaps, there is none at all: the salutation at the beginning of a writing, or at first meeting, being reckoned sufficient. Besides that, possibly, in the midst of your discourse, or in the body of your epistle, or other writing, you have inserted divers good wishes.

I shall now recite some of the salutations at the beginning of the epistles, and in the present order of the books of the New Testament. You will in your own minds compare them with the valedictions, or farewell wishes at the end, which have been already recited.

Rom. i. 7. "To all that be at Rome——Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Cor. i. 3. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Cor. i. 2. "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

Gal. i. 3. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ."

So also Eph. i. 2; and Philip. i. 2; and Col. i. 2; and 1 Thess. i. 1; and 2 Thess. i. 2.

1 Tim. i. 2. "Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and Christ Jesus our Lord." So also 2 Tim. i. 2.

Tit. i. 4. "Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour."

Philem. ver. 3. "Grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

In the epistle to the Hebrews there is no salutation at the beginning.

James i. 1. ——"To the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad, greeting."

1 Pet. i. 2. "To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia,——grace unto you, and peace be multiplied."

2 Pet. i. 2. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord."

In St. John's first epistle there is no solemn wish or prayer, either at the beginning, or the

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end. However at ver. 3, and 4, of chap. i. he says: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us——And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full."

2 John ver. 3. "Grace be with you, mercy and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."

3 John 2. "Beloved, I wish above all things, that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth."

Jude ver. 2. "Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied."

Rev. i. 4. "John to the seven churches in Asia, grace be unto you, and peace, from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before the throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness."

These are the solemn wishes or salutations at the beginning of the apostolical epistles, as under the preceding head we saw their solemn wishes and benedictions at the end.

Before I leave this second proposition I would observe, that there is nothing solemn, but only, as it seems, common in the wishes or salutations in the epistle, written by the apostles and elders at the council of Jerusalem. Acts xv. 23. "The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren, which are of the gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia." And the conclusion at ver. 29, is only this: "If ye keep yourselves from these things, ye shall do well. Farewell."

III. The wishes, prayers, or benedictions of the apostles, at the end of their epistles, are designed for Christians only.

Whether that be expressed or not, it is to be supposed, and understood. If St. Paul sometimes says no more than "grace be with you all," it may be reckoned equivalent to what is a more common form, the "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Which can pertain to such only, as make a profession of faith in Christ, and are desirous of his favour. And sometimes this is expressed, as in St. Peter's first epistle. "Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus." And St. Paul at the end of his epistle to the Ephesians. "Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," that is, "in simplicity:" meaning, probably, such as embraced and adhered to the true doctrine of Christ, without the additional observances of the law of Moses, as necessary to salvation.

But if there be no limitation in the words of the benediction at the end of the epistles, (which, as before hinted, may be sometimes concise and summary) the introductions to the epistles teach us, to whom all the rest is directed, and to whom the blessings, or good wishes, at the end, do belong. For the epistles are all, or however all with very few exceptions, expressly addressed to believers. So: "To all that be at Rome, called to be saints. Unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours——Unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, with all the saints that are in Achaia." And in a like manner in other epistles. Beside that the whole train of the arguments and exhortations shew them to be written to Christians.

IV. The benedictions, or farewell wishes at the end of the epistles, which we are considering, are of a solemn kind, different from common salutations.

That they are not common greetings, is apparent at first sight. This may be argued also from the conclusions of several of the epistles, where there is a common friendly salutation, beside the solemn benediction. The first epistle to the Corinthians concludes in this manner: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus." The conclusion of the epistle to the Philippians is thus: "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they of Cæsar's household. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." The last words of the epistle to Titus are: "All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen." Heb. xiii. 24, 25. "Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen." We might also argue from St. Paul's many salutations of particular persons in the sixteenth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. After which he shuts up all, saying: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all."*

* If any find this Sermon too long to be read at once, here may be a good pause.

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V. The meaning of the valedictory prayer or benediction at the end of this second epistle to the Corinthians seems to be to this purpose: 'May the favour of our Lord Jesus Christ, and 'the love and good will of God be with you, and abide with you. And may you partake of all 'the blessings of the gospel, with all good things needful for you.'

Let us observe each expression.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is so well known, that the word, which we render grace, signifies favour, that there can be no need to prove it. Hereby then is to be understood all that is included in having the favour of Jesus Christ.

"And the love of God." 'And may you enjoy, and continue to have, the love, appro-'bation, and good-will of God: whose good-will is the spring of all happiness, natural and 'spiritual, temporal and eternal.'

"And the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all."

"Communion," or fellowship. The word is used several times in the New Testament, and seems to signify one or other of these two things. First, it sometimes denotes "communication," or distribution. At other times it signifies partaking or "participation" of somewhat together with others.

First, I say, it sometimes denotes communication or distribution of somewhat to others. Rom. xv. 26. "It has pleased them of Macedonia, and Achaia, to make a certain contribution," communion, communication, "for the poor saints at Jerusalem." It is the same word in the original, which is here rendered "communion." 2 Cor. ix. 13. "Whilst by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God——for your liberal distribution to them," communion or communication, "and to all men." Heb. xiii. 16. "But to do good, and to communicate forget not." The Greek is literally thus: "But forget not well-doing, and communion," or communication. For here too is the same word which we have in the text. And the words are well rendered: "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not." These instances, not to mention others, shew that the word does sometimes signify communication, or distribution of some good to others.

It seems also to denote sometimes participation with others in some good. 1 Cor. 1. 9. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called to the fellowship" or communion "of his Son Jesus Christ:" that is, to a participation of the blessings vouchsafed in and through Jesus Christ. And 2 Cor. viii. 14. "What fellowship has light with darkness?" Gal. ii. 9. "They gave unto us the right hands of fellowship:" or admitted us to partake with them in the same office and work in which they were engaged.

Thus it also signifies a participation of good things with others. And both these senses may be included in the word, as used by St. John, and perhaps in some other places. 1 John 1. 2. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us:" that is, that ye may have like privileges with us. "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 'And indeed we are servants of God, and followers of 'Jesus Christ, and have received most delightful and most valuable communications from 'above.'

By the "Holy Ghost," undoubtedly, is often meant in the New Testament, and throughout the scriptures, miraculous powers and gifts, or immediate inspiration, and divine revelation, in an especial manner. Acts vii. 5. St. Stephen, before the Jewish Council, says: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Or, ye have been always wont to oppose and disobey the divine revelations, and the messengers sent to you with them. As ye have now resisted Christ, so did your fathers the prophets in former times.

It is said in St. John's gospel, ch. vii. 39, that the "Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified:" meaning, that the miraculous powers and gifts designed to be bestowed upon the apostles, and others, who believed in Jesus, were not yet vouchsafed to them: the plentiful effusion of such gifts having been deferred till after Christ's ascension, as an evident proof of it all. Acts ii. 4. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." And it is well known, that miraculous gifts, in some degree and proportion, were bestowed upon most believers at that time. Acts v. 32. Peter, and the other apostles before the Jewish council: "And we are witnesses of these things. And so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

This is what the apostle may be thought to mean here: 'to wish that these Christians might

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'continue to partake in miraculous gifts and powers.' And if that be the meaning, it is argued that this benediction, or farewell prayer, is confined to those times, and cannot be reasonably used now.

For farther clearing up this point therefore, and enabling all to judge of it, so far as I am able, I would observe, that words are not always used in their fullest sense and meaning. If all believers in general at that time are spoken of as having the Spirit, yet, as to most of them, it was in a much inferior degree and measure than that of the apostles.

St. Paul says Col. i. 19. "It pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell." In Eph. iii. 19, he prays for those Christians, that "they might be filled with all the fulness of God." Nevertheless none can suppose, that he intends all the power and wisdom that was in Christ. The context does not lead us to think that the apostle intended any miraculous gifts at all. But he means, probably, what the evangelist John does, when he says, ch. i. 16, 17, "And of his fulness have all we received, even grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ:" that is, the true grace of the gospel, with which all Christians ought to be well acquainted. And the apostle there prays particularly for the Ephesians, that they may be so.

In like manner, Eph. i. 17, 18, he prays for the same Ephesian Christians, "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, ye may know what is the hope of his calling." And the rest, which there follows. Not intending, I presume, any new revelation, or immediate inspiration, or the infusing into them any wisdom miraculously: but that in the right use of their reasonable powers and faculties, and recollecting what they had heard from him, and other preachers of the gospel, and attending to this his epistle, and other scriptures, or rightly improving any other means of religious knowledge, they might attain to and be settled in a right conception and understanding of the doctrine of the gospel, as it had been revealed by Christ and his apostles. Upon this place Mr. Locke might be fitly consulted.

Moreover, the phrase, the Holy Ghost, is, I think, plainly used for spiritual good things in general. Luke xi. 9—13. "And I say unto you: Ask, and ye shall receive——For every one that asketh receiveth. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or, if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? Which in St. Matthew is expressed by good things. And I shall likewise recite that context largely, that all may the better judge whether it is not exactly parallel. Mat. vii. 7—11. "Ask, and it shall be given you—— For every one that asketh receiveth——Or what man is there of you, whom if his son shall ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good gifts to them that ask him?"

Prov. 1. 23. "Behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you. I will make known my words unto you." It is not reasonable to think, that thereby is meant inspiration, in the highest meaning of the word. But only: 'If you will hearken unto me, and follow my counsels, you 'will attain to wisdom, and good understanding.'

St. Paul says Eph. i. 3. "Blessed be God, which has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Which thanksgiving, I think, may be used by Christians still, though they have not exactly the same privileges with the Christians of the apostolic age.

Nor is it uncommon for the apostle, near the conclusion of his epistles, to offer up prayers or wishes in behalf of those to whom he writes, for the spiritual blessings of the gospel, or confirmation, and increase of virtue and holiness, and likewise for all that happiness which was then generally included in the word peace, comprehending both temporal and spiritual blessings. Of this some instances may be taken notice of. Eph. 6. 23. "Peace be unto the brethren, and love, with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. iii. 16. "Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always, by all means. The Lord be with you all." And in this very epistle, the second to the Corinthians, the words near the conclusion may be

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observed. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

All these things may lead us to think, that this benediction needs not to be understood of miraculous gifts, and therefore may be still used.

Let me propose some other observations. The first two particulars, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God," may still be desired for all Christians. Why then should the third particular be esteemed peculiar to some?

Farther, though the benediction at the end of this epistle is more particular, I apprehend, that it is no more than equivalent to those in the other epistles. For when it is said "grace be with you," or "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," therein is included a wish of all needful blessings, suited to the circumstances of Christians at that time. And this has no more.

A frequent salutation at the beginning of St. Paul's epistles, as we have seen, is "Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." But at the beginning of the epistles to Timothy and Titus he writes: "Grace, mercy, and peace be to thee." Which nevertheless can import no more than a wish of all happiness. And as much is included in the other forms. So likewise St. Jude's epistle begins after this manner. "Mercy unto you, and peace and love be multiplied." But it may be supposed, that no more is comprehended therein, than in St. Paul's wish of "grace and peace."

"The communion of the Holy Ghost" therefore means a participation in all the blessings of the gospel, with all other needful good things.

"Be with you all," that is, abide with you. 'May these blessings be always your portion and happiness.'

VI. From what has been said by way of explication, we seem to have reason to think, that this valedictory wish and prayer may be still used. However, the preceding argument is referred to the consideration of the serious and inquisitive.

VII. Though this form may be still used, it needs not, it ought not to be always used.

As there are other forms of blessing in the New Testament, it is very fit that they also should be used. Otherwise some might have a superstitious regard for one portion of scripture above another; or indulge a weak and groundless apprehension, that something more extraordinary is proposed to them than is intended.

VIII. These benedictions, when used by us, are not to be pronounced in the way of authority, but only as a prayer, or wish of all good and happiness to others.

Indeed no man can bless authoritatively. No one man, more than another, can convey blessings to any. Nay, none can be blessed of God himself, or obtain true happiness, unless they will desire and seek it, and will be in the use of proper means to obtain it.

IX. What has been now said, may satisfy us about the manner of pronouncing these benedictions.

Some, of good judgment, have scrupled to pronounce them in the form of a wish for others; thinking that to be peculiar to the apostles, and as if so doing had in it an appearance of authority. Therefore they choose to say: "And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all." But to me this appears to be a mere scruple, without reason. For we may wish and pray for the same blessings for others, which we ask for ourselves. A writer at the end of an epistle, or a speaker at the end of a discourse, does properly express a prayer or wish of good for those to whom he has been writing or speaking. And if they will return the like prayer or wish, it will be very acceptable. You know very well that the apostles of Christ did often entreat the prayers of their fellow-christians, both for temporal and spiritual blessings, needful for them, and suited to their work, office, and particular circumstances.

X. The solemn salutations at the beginning, and valedictions at the end of the apostolical epistles, are not to be made use of upon common occasions. They are suited only to the solemnity of public worship, or some other occasions of great moment.

Upon the whole it seems to me, that the salutations at the beginning of the apostolical epistles may help us to understand the benedictions at the end. And if "grace and peace from God, and from Christ," at the beginning, imply a wish, or prayer of favour and blessing and all happiness: in like manner the same is the import of all the valedictions, or farewell-wishes, at the

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conclusion. And I apprehend, that as to the sense, meaning and design, when applied to Christians, there is little difference whether the form be, "Grace be with you," or "may the God of peace be with you," or "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," or the form in the text. For in each, and all, is intended to be desired and asked the best of blessings, and all needful blessings: that men may have, and keep themselves in the favour of Christ, and the comfortable persuasion of it: that they may always enjoy the love of God, and do all that lies in their power to secure it: that they may grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and his gospel, and that the protection of Providence may be over them. In a word, that they may prosper in all things: that, if their soul prospers, which is the principal thing, they may be in health also: and that through the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the power of his spiritual and heavenly doctrine, their whole soul and body may be preserved blameless unto his coming.

APPLICATION. I shall now mention a thought or two by way of application.

The use of these benedictions at the conclusion of our public worship, may be reckoned to hold forth two instructions, both to ministers and people.

1. One is, that they ought to bear good will to each other, and sincerely to desire each other's welfare. So much certainly is implied in him who offers these prayers. And, as before hinted, it may be considered whether they ought not also to be sincerely returned.

2. These prayers and wishes teach us in a summary way, what we ought all to desire and seek after, even the favour of Christ, the love of God, the knowledge of the gospel, and the evidences of its truth, and all the spiritual blessings attending it.

If from time to time sincere wishes and prayers are expressed, that these blessings may be your portion, should you not desire and endeavour to obtain them?

And if these blessings are commonly wished and desired at the end of our religious services, does not this intimate that our public performances ought to be suited to promote the great ends of men's spiritual improvement, and their comfort and happiness here and hereafter? May these ends be always proposed by us! And may they be obtained! that our profiting may be apparent to ourselves, and to others.

SERMON XXIX.

OF PRAYING IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. John xvi. 24.

OUR Lord is speaking to the disciples of his being soon to be taken from them, and of his seeing them again, though not to abide any long time personally with them. ver. 22, 23. "And ye now therefore have sorrow. But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice: and your joy no man taketh from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." 'At that time, 'after my removal, you will not be able to address yourselves directly to me, as you now do. 'But that needs not to give you much concern: for whatever petitions you present to the Father 'in my name, they will be heard and answered.'

Ver. 24—27. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs. The time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs: but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name. And I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."

Our Lord speaks of praying in his name, in some other places, to which I now only refer. As John xiv. 13, 14. and xv. 16.

In order to illustrate this point, I would first show in general how that phrase, doing any thing in the name of another, is used in the scriptures. Secondly, I shall endeavour to show dis-

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tinctly what it is to pray in the name of Christ. After which I intend to mention some remarks, both instructive and practical.

I. Let us observe in general the meaning of the phrase, acting in another's name.

To do any thing in the name of another is to act by his authority, and according to his directions, and as his disciples.

John v. 43. Our Lord says to the Jews: "I am come in my Father's name," that is, with authority from him: and I act, as by commission under him. "But ye receive me not."

John x. 25. "The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness of me."

When our Lord made his public entrance at Jerusalem, his character as the Messiah, the anointed and sent of God, was acknowledged by the people in this manner: Matt. xxi. 9. "The multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosannah to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Or, as in St. Luke xix. 38. "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." And John xii. 13. "Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Our Lord Jesus Christ therefore acted in the name of God, by whom he was sent. Christ's disciples in like manner taught in his name, and wrought miracles in his name, that is, with his authority, and a commission from him, by virtue of powers derived from him. Mark xvi. 17, 18. "And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out dæmons. They shall speak with new tongues. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." St. Peter says to the lame man at the temple, Acts iii. 6. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." Afterwards, Acts iv. 1—9. Peter and John were summoned before the Jewish council, who "asked: By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" that is, by whose power and authority? "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them: ——Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God has raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand before you whole." That a miracle was wrought they could not deny: but that the doctrine taught by the apostles might not spread, they judged it expedient to "charge them, that they speak henceforth to no man in that name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor to teach in the name of Jesus," ver. 16—18.

When St. Peter healed Eneas at Lydda, "who had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy, he said unto him: Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. Arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately," Acts ix. 33, 34. When Paul intended to cure the young woman at Philippi, who had a spirit of divination, "he said to the spirit: I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." Acts xvi. 18.

Our blessed Lord, the more effectually to convince men of the importance of real holiness, expresseth himself in this manner. Matt. vii. 22, 23. "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out dæmons? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Acting as under authority from thee we have done all these things: nevertheless, if they have been workers of iniquity, they will be rejected by him.

James v. 10. "Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." The same phrase occurs frequently in the Old Testament, in speaking of the prophets. Jer. xxvi. 9. "Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, this house shall be as Shiloh?" ver. 16. "Then said the princes of Judah, This man is not worthy to die: for he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord." See there also ver. 20. and ch. xliv. 16.

St. Paul directs Col. iii. 17. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus:" that is, according to his command and appointment.

We will observe a few more instances of the use of this phrase, where the meaning is somewhat different. Matt. x. 41. "He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward. And he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward." To receive a prophet in the name of a prophet, or a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, is to receive them as such. Accordingly, to pray in the name of Christ will be to pray as his disciples. It follows at ver. 42. "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple," that is, as a disciple of mine, "verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

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In like manner Mark ix. 39—41. "But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name," that is, as by authority from me, or as a disciple, though he does not follow me with you, "that can lightly speak evil of me: for he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, in my name," as a disciple of mine, "because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." And see Matt. xviii. 5. Luke ix. 48.

All these several instances of the use of this phrase are sufficient to show, that to do any thing in the name of another, and particularly in the name of Christ, is the same as to do it by his authority, according to his directions, and as his disciples, or as belonging to him.

There may be other uses of this phrase, or of a phrase resembling it. But those already mentioned are very common, and seem most suited to the point which we are considering.

Sometimes the name of a person is the same as himself. Ps. xliv. 20. "If we have forgotten the name of our God," that is, if we have forgotten our God. Ps. lxix. 30. "I will praise the name of God with a song," that is, I will praise God in a psalm. John iii. 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God:" that is, because he has not believed in the only begotten Son of God, or the Messiah. 1 John iii. 23. "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." And ch. v. 13. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God:" that is, who believe in Jesus Christ, or the Son of God.

In other places the phrase is somewhat different, not "in the name," but "into the name." Such is the most exact and literal version of Christ's general commission to his apostles, after his resurrection, in Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go ye therefore, and disciple all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" or into the belief and profession of, and obedience to, the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ, with the authority of God the Father, and confirmed to be divine, by miraculous works, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. So also Rom. vi. 3. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" that is, they who were baptized into the belief and profession of Christ, and his doctrine, were also, and particularly baptized into the belief of his death, and a profession of an obligation to be conformed to him in sufferings, if need be: and to die to sin, and live to righteousness. And 1 Cor. x. 2. the apostle argues, that the Jewish people "were baptized into Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea:" that is, were initiated into an obligation to obey the laws and commandments delivered by him, and to be his disciples.

II. Having now seen in general what it is to do any thing in any one's name, I proceed to show distinctly what it is to ask, or pray for, any thing in the name of Christ. And I apprehend that it may be comprized in three following particulars:

1. In praying in the name of Christ it is supposed, that the persons who offer those prayers believe in Jesus Christ, and are his disciples, and do sincerely strive and endeavour to act and behave as such.

2. To pray in the name of Christ is to offer prayers to God according to his directions, and in a manner suited to his doctrine or institution.

3. Herein may be also included, that oftentimes we should present our addresses to God, through, or by him, as our great high priest, and intercessor with God.

1. In praying in the name of Christ it is supposed, that they who offer prayers believe in Jesus Christ, and are his disciples, and sincerely endeavour to act as such.

It seems, that this is necessarily implied, and presupposed. For who should think to pray in the name of Christ, who does not believe in him, and profess to do so? Who should go to God in the name of Christ, who does not believe him to be a teacher come from God?

It seems to be implied also, as before hinted, that they do strive and endeavour to behave as disciples of Jesus. For the doctrine of Christ being very practical, he who neglects the rules of life delivered by him, is not a Christian. He is so in name, but not in deed. And as there are many strict and comprehensive rules of duty enjoined by Christ, so his principles concerning the spiritual nature of God, the great love of God to us, and the promises of future happiness, all tend to secure and promote holiness of life.

We are led to this observation by the coherence, that is, by some things said by our Lord, in all the places where he speaks of praying in his name, as well as by general considerations, taken from the divine perfection in wisdom and holiness.

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So in what follows soon after the text. "At that time ye shall ask in my name. And I say not, that I shall pray the Father for you." 'This I need not say, though I shall certainly do it.' "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." 'A sincere faith in me, and an open profession of my name, without 'worldly views, from a conviction of truth, are in themselves very acceptable to God. And he 'will approve of you, and bless you, though I were not particularly to interest myself in your 'favour.'

John xiv. 14, 15. "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments." Ch. xv. 16, 17.——I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go, and bring forth fruit——that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another." All which, I think, clearly shows, that together with praying in his name our Lord enjoined, "keeping his commandments," particularly his commandment of mutual love, and the bearing fruit. And without this he does not assure that their prayers would be answered. And what is said in these texts just cited, is agreeable to 1 John iii. 22, 23. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his commandment, [herein the whole will of God is summed up] that we believe on his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another."

And it is a certain maxim, that "God heareth not sinners. But if any man be a worshipper of God, and does his will, him he heareth," John ix. 31.

This is not said to discourage any. For when sinful men repent, and forsake the evil of their ways, and their doings, they will find favour with God. But when men profess to repent, they should "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," and continue to walk in all God's ordinances, without returning to folly.

2. To pray in the name of Christ is to pray according to his directions, and agreeably to the nature of his institution of religion.

Good men must ask for good things in a right manner. And they who are good and wise are likely to ask for good things. And they will usually perform acts of worship in a right and acceptable manner.

Here I shall mention several particulars taken from our Lord's observations and directions concerning prayer in divers places.

Only premising this: that as for the matter of prayer, we may certainly ask for all good things, both temporal and spiritual, for ourselves and others, for all good men, for the world in general, for those who are in error and ignorance, that they may be enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, and may be saved, and for all who are in authority over us. We not only may, but we ought to pray to God for our own welfare, and for the welfare of others. We may pray for direction in our affairs, especially in things of great moment. So our Lord, before he completed the number of his twelve apostles, "continued a whole night in prayer to God," Luke vi. 12. We may pray to be preserved from evil, and for wisdom and strength, equal to the difficulties we are exercised with. We may pray for those who have done good unto us, that we may be rewarded by him who is the only infallible judge of right and wrong. We may pray for those who have injured us, that they may obtain repentance, and be saved. We may pray for our friends and relatives, that they may have all things necessary and conducive to their welfare here and hereafter.

I now proceed to mention distinctly our Lord's directions concerning prayer.

1.) Christians ought to ask for the good things of this life, and for deliverance from the evils of it, with moderation of affection and desire, and with submission to the will of God.

This is peculiarly suited to the Christian institution, by which the things of another world have been set in a very clear light. It does not become a Christian ardently to desire the great things of this world, but rather to be contented with daily bread, food and raiment, such things as are convenient in the condition and station of life allotted to him. Matt. vi. 33. "But seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness. And all things shall be added unto you." The good things of this life we are to desire, so far as may be needful: not to spend upon our lusts, in riot and excess, but to be employed in a sober use, for the support of nature, and fitting us for the service of God, and to give to others, as their need may require.

We are also to desire deliverance from evil, with submission to the will of God, as our Lord did, saying: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from us. Not our will, but thine be done."

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So, as disciples of Jesus, we ought to pray in such cases, because we know, that God is able to overrule all these things for our good. And that if he do not see fit to prevent the evils we fear from befalling us, he can uphold us, and enable us to bear them with patience, and for his glory.

2.) Another direction of Christ concerning prayer is, that we pray, filled with love to one another, and to all men in general.

Mark xi. 25, 26. "And, when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you. For if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. To the like purpose Matt. vi. 14, 15.

Matt. v. 44. "But I say unto you: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." All this they are prepared for, and are able to perform, who, as before shown, believe in Jesus, and endeavour to act, as his disciples.

A Christian, in his prayers, ought to be filled with good will to all men, and to desire the same things for others, which he asks for himself. And they who unite together in prayer, ought mutually to desire each other's welfare and prosperity, spiritual and temporal. This may be what our Lord intends, when he says: "Again, I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

3.) Another direction of Christ to his disciples, is, that they should pray with humility.

Luke xviii. 9—14. Our Lord "spake this parable unto certain, which trusted in themselves, and despised others. Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a pharisee and the other a publican. The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are——And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven; but smote upon his breast, saying: God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased. And he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."

In the application of another parable, our Lord says to his disciples: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants. We have done that which was our duty to do," Luke xviii. 10.

Christ taught his disciples, daily to ask forgiveness of sins. A true disciple of Jesus will confess his sins and failings, and own the defects of his service and obedience: still believing, that God is very good, and that his rewards will exceed the merit of our services.

4.) Another direction of our Lord is, that we pray in faith, with a firm persuasion of God's goodness, and of his readiness to hear and answer, and give the good things we ask for, and stand in need of.

Matt. vii. 9—11. "Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asks, receives: and he that seeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or, what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" And to the like purpose exactly in Luke xi. 9—13.

And it is the doctrine of the text. "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily I say unto you: whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

One reason of this, that they who pray in Christ's name, or according to his directions, ask for nothing but what is lawful and good, with a view to the glory of God, and with resignation to his will, if they are temporal things. Therefore their prayers are heard, and their petitions are granted. They either receive the good things they ask: or have what is better, strength to practise self-denial and patience, and thereby to glorify God.

However, certainly, it is the design of our Lord, to encourage his disciples to go to God, with a lively persuasion of his goodness. He requires that they should live in this world without anxiety, and depend upon the divine bounty for needful supplies: and not seek them

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with an importunity which implies a supposition that God would not grant without much entreaty. Therefore he says, Matt. vi. 7. "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do. For they think to be heard for their much speaking." Again, ver 31, 32. "Therefore take no thought," be not anxious "for your life, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?——For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things."

This trust in God, this assurance of being heard, is also recommended by Christ's apostles. James i. 5, 6, 7. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." They who waver in their profession of Christianity, and are doubtful in their fidelity to Christ, will receive nothing. But they who are steadfast in their profession, and in the general tenour and course of their life act as Christians, and sincerely strive to behave in all things as such, when they seek for wisdom, will obtain it, and ought to be persuaded that God giveth liberally and upbraideth not.

And Heb. iv. 14—16. "Seeing then, that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession: for we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need."

5.) Another direction of our Lord is, that we persevere in prayer, and as occasions require, renew our addresses to God, and pray with importunity, hoping he will at length hear us, and vouchsafe a gracious answer to our requests.

Luke xviii. 1—7. "And he spake a parable unto them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint, saying: There was in a city a judge, who feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying: Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a while. But afterwards he said within himself: Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said: Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily."

There is also somewhat to the like purpose in Luke xi. 5—9: after the evangelist's account of our Lord's teaching the disciples to pray, or delivering to them what is called the Lord's prayer. "And he said unto them: Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go to him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves. For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. And he from within shall answer, and say: Trouble me not. The door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot rise, and give thee. I say unto you: though he will not rise, and give him, because he is his friend: yet because of his importunity he will rise, and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you: Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Agreeable to this doctrine of our Saviour, are various directions of the apostles in their epistles. Eph. vi. 18. "Praying always, with all prayer and supplication, in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints." And 1 Thess. v. 17. "Pray without ceasing."

Of such prayer, for himself, and others, we can perceive from his epistles, that St. Paul was an example. Yea our Lord himself in the time of his ministry has given us an example of frequent, renewed, believing, importunate, persevering prayer to God.

That is the second thing which we have supposed to be included in praying in the name of Christ, even according to his directions, and agreeably to the nature of his institution. Several of which directions have been now mentioned.*

3. In praying in the name of Christ may be included, that always, or at least oftentimes, we should present our addresses to God through him, as by our high priest, and intercessor with God.

* If any find this sermon too long to be read at once, here may be a proper pause.

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This particular may be illustrated by several things in the Acts, and the Epistles.

Eph. iii. 14—16. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ——that he would grant you to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." That is, he worships God in the character of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So in the Old Testament the pious among the Jews often worshipped God in the character of the God of Abraham, and the other patriarchs. 1 Kings xviii. 36. "And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, let it be known this day, that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant." See also 1 Chron. xxix. 10, and 18.

Moreover it is a respect due to Jesus Christ, by whom we have been brought nigh unto God, and through whom God dispenseth blessings to us, not only that our prayers, but our praises also, and all our sacrifices and services should be presented to the Father, as by his means, and through his hands.

In Heb. iv. 14—16, before quoted, the apostle says, "Seeing then, we have a great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens,——let us hold fast our profession: for we have not an High Priest, which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Having such an High Priest, we have encouragement in all our pressures and difficulties, especially in the cause and service of true religion, to offer up prayers, through him, with hopes of obtaining all needful aid and succour.

In the same epistle the apostle gives a like direction concerning praise. And it may be applied to every part of worship, and to every kind of religious and spiritual service. Heb. xiii. 15, 16. "By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name. But to do good, and to communicate, forget not. For with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Agreeable hereto is what St. Peter says: "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a royal priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 5. Which words, I apprehend, might be more properly rendered thus: "Ye are—— a royal priesthood, to offer up through Jesus Christ spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God." Denoting, not that they are acceptable through Christ, but that those spiritual acceptable sacrifices, should be offered up to God through Christ. St. Peter exactly agrees with the apostle Paul, Rom. xii. 1. Spiritual sacrifices are such as God requires, and are in themselves acceptable to him. This interpretation is also confirmed by the text just quoted from the epistle to the Hebrews: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually."

And it is frequent with the apostle Paul, to address praise or thanks to God in or through Jesus Christ. Rom. xvi. 27. "To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." And near the beginning of that epistle, i. 8. "First, I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all: that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."

And it is fit that our spiritual sacrifices should be offered to God through Christ, who has taught us to offer such sacrifices, and through whom God has bestowed upon us invaluable blessings and privileges. As it is said by the apostle, Rom. v. 1, 2. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace." Acts x. 43. St. Peter preaching to Cornelius, and the gentiles, assembled at his house, says: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name," or through him, "whosoever believeth in him should receive remission of sins." And Eph. i. 3—5. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world——having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will." See likewise Eph. ii. 4—7, and iv. 32, and Rom. vi. 23, and 1 Pet. v. 10, and 2 Pet. i. 3.

It may then be thought fit and reasonable, that as all the distinguishing spiritual benefits and advantages, which we enjoy, have been conferred upon us through Christ; so our services and sacrifices, which we are enabled to perform and offer, should be presented to God the Father, in and through him.

Moreover Christ is spoken of as our intercessor and advocate, now he is in heaven.

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Rom. viii. 34. "Who is he that condemneth? Christ that died? yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?"

Heb. vii. 24, 25. "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost," or for ever, "that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

And St. John 1 Ep. ii. 1, speaks of Jesus Christ as our "advocate with the Father." St. Paul, 1 Tim. ii. 5, says, he is "the one mediator between God and men."

Some therefore have supposed, that this is the principal thing, or all that our Lord intends in those places of St. John's gospel, where he speaks to his disciples of "asking in his name:" that all their addresses should be presented to God through him, as high priest, mediator, and intercessor or advocate.

And indeed, I think it appears, from the directions and examples, just alleged, to be very proper frequently to offer up our prayers to God through him, and in his name, expressly. And it is highly becoming us to worship God in the character of the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Moreover, for certain, Jesus Christ, now in heaven, intercedes for his people. Of which his prayers for the disciples, when with them, especially those recorded by St. John, ch. xvii. may help us to form some idea.

Nevertheless I think that is not all that our Lord means by "praying," or "asking the Father in his name:" nor the principal intention of it. But he teaches his disciples to take care to pray, according to the directions, which at divers times and often, he had given them: and in a manner suited to the spiritual and heavenly doctrine, which they had received from him.

That asking through his intercession is not the only or principal thing intended by asking in his name, may be argued from this very context: ver. 25, 26, "At that day ye shall" or will "ask in my name. And I say unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed, that I came out from God."

Therein he assures them, that soon, meaning after his resurrection, or rather, after his ascension, when the Spirit should be poured down upon them, they would be able, and actually would pray to the Father in his name: and when they did so, there would be no absolute necessity that he should pray the Father for them. For when they prayed in his name, as his disciples, God would hear them, though he did not intercede.

This plainly shews, that praying in his name does not necessarily imply, desiring to be heard and accepted through his intercession.

Moreover our Lord seems to attribute more virtue to praying in his name, than can be ascribed to praying to be heard through his intercession. For he says to the disciples: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Barely calling Christ Lord, and making use of his name in our prayers, will not secure a favourable answer. But if we pray to God, as disciples of Jesus, and according to the directions which he has given; then it may be very reasonable to hope, that whatever we ask, God will give it unto us.

Once more, it must be supposed, that after our Lord's ascension the apostles did pray in his name, and as his disciples. Nevertheless in their epistles are found prayers and praises, which are not offered up through Christ, or in his name expressly. Prayers without that expression may be seen in Acts i. 24, 25; Col. i. 9—11; 1 Thess. v. 23; and elsewhere.

We quoted some while ago two places of the epistle to the Romans, where St. Paul thanks God, and gives glory to God through Jesus Christ. So also Eph. iii. 20, 21. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think——unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." But in 1 Tim. i. 17, omitting by or through Christ, he says: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." And Philip. iv. 20. "Now unto God, even our Father, be glory for ever and ever. Amen." And St. Jude concludes his epistle with these words. "To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever. Amen."

I beg leave to observe farther, that the apostles never pray to God to grant them any thing for the sake of Christ. Nor is God any where in the New Testament said to vouchsafe blessings to men for Christ's sake. We read in our version, Eph. iv. 32. "And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

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But a more exact translation would be, "as God in Christ," or through Christ, "has forgiven you." So the apostle says at the beginning of the same epistle to the Ephesians, ch. i. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Through Christ God dispenseth all blessings to men, and particularly forgiveness of sins. Through him forgiveness is vouchsafed to all who repent. And men are called and invited to repent, with the gracious promise and assurance of forgiveness of sins, without taking on them the burden of the law of Moses. Luke xxiv. 47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Acts x. 43. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." See likewise ch. ii. 19, and ch. xiii. 38.——"through his name is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." And see 2 Cor. v. 19; and Rom. vi. 23. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Application. I now proceed to mention some remarks by way of application; which also may be of use for farther illustrating this point.

1. We hence perceive that prayers and praises ought generally, if not always, to be offered to God the Father.

Says our Lord: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." In St. Stephen, Acts vii. 59, is an instance of a prayer addressed to Christ, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And St. Paul, 1 Thess. iii. 11. "Now God himself, even our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you." But usually in the Acts and in the Epistles, prayers are directed to God the Father, to whom our Lord himself prayed when on earth.

Doubtless our blessed Lord, in his state of exaltation in heaven, knows all things done on this earth. And if he be intercessor for us, as we are taught in the New Testament, it is requisite he should know all the prayers that are offered by his people for whom he intercedes. Before he left the disciples he assured them, John xiv. 13. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do," I will take care it shall be done, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Jesus Christ, likewise, as constituted Lord and Judge of the world, must intimately know all things done therein. This knowledge of things he claims and manifests in his messages and warnings sent to the churches in the revelation. Rev. ii. 18, 19. "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and patience——ver. 23. And all the churches shall know, that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts. And I will give unto every one of you, according to his works." Nevertheless, as we have seen, prayers and praises are usually in the New Testament presented to God the Father. And so St. Paul directs. Eph. v. 20. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God, even the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." And Heb. xiii. 15. "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually."

2. We are now able to solve that question, concerning the prayer, which Christ taught his disciples, and is recorded in Matt. vi. and Luke xi. whether it be proper to be used, since Christ's ascension.

For some have argued in this manner. Jesus Christ, say they, in St. John's gospel, a little before he left his disciples, directed them "to pray in his name." But his name is not mentioned in the Lord's prayer. Therefore it was designed for the use of the disciples only, till he was risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven.

But that argument is of no force, according to the interpretation now given of asking the Father in Christ's name, that is, according to his directions, as his disciples, in a way suited to the sublimity of his institution. Such certainly is this prayer. It is truly evangelical, according to the utmost perfection of the rules delivered by Christ concerning prayer. For here spiritual blessings are asked in the first place, temporal good things with moderation, "daily bread," a sufficiency only. And when we offer up this prayer, we pray with a benevolent, forgiving temper of mind. Finally, the overruling Providence of God in all things is acknowledged, and we pray to be preserved from evil, or to be supported and strengthened under it, so as that we may not fall, and sin against God. All the petitions of this prayer therefore are evangelical. And if offered with a suitable temper, the prayer will be accepted.

There is another objection against the use of this prayer, which also will appear to be of no

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moment. Here we pray, that the "kingdom of God may come:" whereas, say they, the kingdom of God is already come. The kingdom of God, or the gospel-dispensation, was set up, and made known upon Christ's ascension. And his apostles soon preached the gospel every where, and Jews and Gentiles were received into the church of God.

But in answer to this, it is obvious to say, that "God's name may [yet] be hallowed," and "his kingdom may come" more universally. And we may therefore reasonably pray, that it may be upheld and advanced.

This prayer then, in every part of it, is still very proper to be used, and without inserting Christ's name. For if the petitions be offered with a suitable temper, the petitioner prays "in the name of Christ, as a disciple of his."

This prayer therefore may be still very fitly used. But I do not say, that it ought to be always used, or that we ought never to address ourselves to God, without saying this prayer.

3. We can now understand those words of Christ to the disciples: "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name."

The meaning is not, as some have supposed, hitherto you have not made use of my name in your prayers: but hitherto you have not prayed, as my disciples ought to do. Hitherto your prayers have wanted somewhat of that spirituality, and heavenly-mindedness, which becomes my doctrine.

It is well known to all, that for a good while Christ's disciples had ambitious and worldly views, and desires of pre-eminence: which produced jealousies and emulations, inconsistent with the perfection of mutual love. But our Lord's death, and resurrection, and ascension to heaven, together with illuminations received from above, would enable them fully to understand the tenour of his doctrine, and raise their minds to things above. The glory of God, the interests of religion, and the real welfare of mankind, would then be their prevailing concerns, and they would be able to pray in Christ's name, as his disciples, and according to the rules, which he had given concerning prayer.

We are led to this interpretation by the words, immediately following those of the text. "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs," or parables. "The time cometh, when I shall no more speak to you in proverbs. But I shall shew you plainly of the Father."

Our Lord had told the disciples "all things," John xv. 15, the whole scheme of the gospel: as we may clearly discern from the accounts of his ministry, which have been left us by the evangelists. But their prejudices, strengthened too by carnal affections, made them slow of understanding. Our Lord therefore now says to them: 'My discourses oftentimes have appeared 'to you obscure, and you have not fully perceived my intention. Nor could I speak so plainly, 'as was to be desired. Because of the danger of offending you, some truths have been repre-'sented in ambiguous expressions. But now the time is coming, when all your prejudices will 'be removed, and you will clearly understand how God is to be worshipped, and you will com-'prehend and observe the directions which I have given you, as my disciples. Then you will 'be able to pray in a spiritual and acceptable manner. Ver. 26. "In that day ye shall" or will '"ask in my name. And I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you. For the 'Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed, that I came out from 'God." Your requests will then be so reasonable and acceptable, that I need not intercede for 'you, though I certainly shall do so. For your praying, and acting in other respects, as my 'disciples, the Father himself will love you, and manifest himself to you, and grant whatsoever 'you ask.'

'In that day, and thenceforward, you will not ask to sit, one of you on my right hand, and 'another on the left, in my kingdom: whilst the rest are offended, and jealous of partial respects 'for such petitioners: apprehensive, lest they should obtain a pre-eminence, to which they are 'not entitled, and prejudicial to others. But you will all desire the best things, in the first 'place. Such things you will desire for yourselves, and for each other, and for all men. Your 'most earnest desires will be, that you may be faithful to God, and that others may be so 'likewise, and so act in all things as to obtain eternal life.'

4. It is reasonable to infer, that all Christians should be desirous to pray in the name of Christ, or, as his disciples, agreeably to the nature of his doctrine, and according to the rules which he has given concerning prayer.

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So we ought to endeavour to pray, both in private and in public, particularly in public. There, especially, we ought to be careful to pray, as disciples of Jesus. Some will bring into their prayers their own particular notions about the fall of Adam, and its consequences, original sin, the corruption of the human nature, the incomprehensible order of divine decrees, election, grace, and other points. Others, and possibly the same persons, at other times, will introduce their particular system of the Trinity, or the person of Christ, and his transactions. But public prayer should be such as all Christians can join in. We are not in our prayers to strive to impose our own notions upon others, or to exclude any Christians from joining in the addresses we present to God. A minister, in his public prayers, is to offer up common requests and praises, the unfeigned devotions of the assembly. Public prayers are not to be Lutheran, nor Calvinistical, nor Arminian, but Christian, and scriptural. There should be in them neither Arianism, nor Nicenism. How contrary to the Christian and apostolical rule, to offer petitions, or make declarations in prayer, to which a sincere Christian cannot assent, or about which he has doubts and scruples! For according to St. Paul's argument in Rom. xiv. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," or doubtful, contested intricate systems and speculations: "but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of [wise] men. Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

A preacher may in his discourses propose to the people his own senses and interpretations of scripture, and offer his reasons for them. But in public addresses to God he should offer common requests and thanksgivings, in which all sincere Christians can unite. In a word, public prayers ought to be agreeable to the "common faith of God's elect," Tit. i. 4: and the doctrine of the "common salvation," Jude 3, preached by Christ and his apostles, to Jews and Gentiles, and all men under heaven.

5. We hence learn how to pray to God so as to be heard.

So is the text. "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask," that is, in my name, "and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

To the like purpose in other places, already cited. John xv. 7. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you; ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." 1 John iii. 22. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." And ch. v. 14, 15. "And this is the confidence that we have in him: that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know, that he hear us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

It is therefore a great happiness to have our desires regulated by the reason of things, and the will of God. To desire nothing but what is reasonable: to desire the best things, and to have them. This is great happiness. To have no desires, but what will be gratified. If we desire perishing riches, and do not obtain them, we are ruined. If we take care to lay up to ourselves treasures in heaven, and seek the kingdom of God, and its righteousness, in the first place; we shall have what we most desire, and a competency of other things therewith. The best things cannot be taken from us. If some other things are lost, those which are most valuable, and remain, will satisfy and support us. Let us then do all things in the name of Jesus Christ, ever acting as his disciples. And let us ask in his name, according to his directions, that we may receive the things which we ask, and "our joy may be full," or we may have abundant satisfaction and joy.

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SERMON XXX.

THE WOMAN THAT ANOINTED JESUS WITH PRECIOUS OINTMENT.

Verily I say unto you: Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.[a]—Matt. xxvi. 13.

THIS action of the woman here spoken of, who anointed our Lord with precious ointment, may at first appear a thing of little moment. But since our Lord signified his approbation of it, and declared that it would in future times be celebrated; it is not unlikely that it may afford us some profitable meditations, if we carefully consider it.

For which reason I shall review this history, and then make some remarks upon it: in which I shall endeavour to shew how we may improve it to our benefit.

I. In the first place I shall review and consider this history.

Our blessed Lord was now come up to Jerusalem, to keep the passover, at which he suffered. And, as you well know, he came up at this time several days before the day of the passover. But he took up his lodging at Bethany, a village near Jerusalem. In the morning he went up to Jerusalem, and taught there in the temple. In the evening he returned to Bethany. This was his method, till the night, in which he ate the passover, according to the appointment of the law at Jerusalem.

Says St. Matthew, at ver. 6 and 7 of this chapter: "Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper," that is, who once had the leprosy, but had been cured, and probably by our Lord, "there came unto him a woman, having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat."

In St. Mark xiv. 3. "And being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman, having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and she brake," or opened, "the box, and poured it on his head."

That is the first part of the history, the action of this woman, or the respect shewn by her to our Lord.

The second part consists of the notice which some took of it, in a way of censure. In St. Matthew's gospel, ver. 8, 9, it is thus expressed. "But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, to what purpose is this waste? For it might have been sold for much, and given to the poor."

Or, as in St. Mark, ver. 4, 5. "And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said: Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her." In the computation of the price of the ointment, we must not think of our own, but of the Roman coin, then current in Judea, and other provinces of the Empire. The three hundred pence here mentioned might amount to about ten pounds of our money.

The third part of the history consists of our Lord's vindication of this action.

In St. Matthew, ver. 10—14, it is thus: "When Jesus understood it, he said unto them: Why trouble ye the woman? For she has wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you. But me ye have not always. For in that she has poured this ointment upon my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her."

In St. Mark this concluding part of the history stands in these words, ver. 6—9. "And Jesus said: Let her alone. Why trouble you her? She has wrought a good work upon me. For

[a] For the whole of that history, in the several Evangelists, see Matt. xxvi. 6—13. Mark xiv. 3—9. John xi. 2. and xii. 1—8.

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ye have the poor with you always: and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good. But me ye have not always. She has done what she could. She is come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you: wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she has done, shall be told for a memorial of her."

The sum and substance of this apology of our Lord is to this purpose. 'You always have 'among you necessitous objects. And you may relieve them, whenever you please. There will 'be frequent opportunities for shewing benevolence to them, if you have ability. I am as a stranger, 'and my stay among you will be short. I have often spoken to you of my departure. And you 'may be assured, the time is now at hand. And opportunities of testifying respect to me, in any 'such way as this, will soon be over.

'You are apt, some of you, to think this expense excessive. But if this ointment were laid 'out upon a dead body, you would not think it too much. For that is an established custom 'among you, and you all think it laudable to embalm at a great expense the bodies of persons, 'who are of eminence and distinction. You may consider this anointing as an embalming of me. 'And it may so happen, that neither she, nor any others, shall actually have an opportunity to 'lay out all the rich spices and ointments upon me, when dead, which they may be disposed to 'make use of.

'Upon the whole, the testimony of respect, which this woman has shewn me, has in it nothing 'blameable: but it is worthy of commendation. And I readily testify my approbation of it. And 'I do now declare, that this action of hers will be published all over the world, and make a part 'of the history of things relating to myself, during my abode here among you. And the time is 'hastening, when some here present will be fully convinced, that this token of respect, now 'shown me, was not extravagant and undeserved, and will themselves cheerfully spread it abroad 'as an action of no small merit, and entitled to applause and commendation.'

There is a relation in St. John, which is very like this, though different in some particulars. Which has occasioned a difficulty, and raised doubts in the minds of attentive and inquisitive readers of the gospels, whether two several actions are spoken of, or one and the same only, with different circumstances.

Says St. John, ch. xii. 1—8. "Then Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper, and Martha served. But Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment, of spikenard very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus: Let her alone. Against my burying has she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you. But me ye have not always."

To me it seems, that this is the same thing, which is related by the two former evangelists. If so, St. John has let us know, who this woman was. She was Mary sister of Lazarus. So he also says expressly at the beginning of the eleventh chapter: "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick."

St. John having before given the history of the resurrection of Lazarus, it was very natural for him, when he came to relate this anointing of our Lord, to say by whom it was done. But the two former evangelists having never mentioned Lazarus, or his sisters, in their gospels, when they came to relate this action, forbear to mention any name, and speak only of a certain woman.

St. Luke, ch. x. 38—42, has an account of our Lord's being entertained at the house of Martha: but he says nothing of this anointing. If he had related it, I make no question, that he, like St. John, would have said by whom it was done.

St John indeed speaks of Judas only, who complained of the waste of the ointment, whereas the other evangelists express themselves as if other disciples also had disliked it. But it is well known to be very common with all writers to use the plural number, when one person only is intended. Nor is it impossible, that others might have some uneasiness about it, though they

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were far from being so disgusted at it as Judas was. And their concern for the poor was sincere. His was self-interested, and mere pretence.

One thing more should be observed for avoiding mistakes. It ought to be reckoned certain, that Mary, sister of Lazarus, is different from Mary Magdalen; and also from the woman that was a "sinner," of whom St. Luke speaks, ch. vii. 37, 38. She also "anointed our Lord's feet, and wiped them with her hair. But her name is no where mentioned. And it is very observable, that of the woman mentioned by him, St. Luke says, "she stood at the feet of Jesus, behind him, weeping, and did wash his feet with tears." A particular quite omitted both by St. John, and by the two former evangelists, in their several accounts of the person, who anointed Jesus at Bethany a short time before his death.

II. I now proceed, without farther delay, to mention some remarks upon this history, and shew how we may improve it for our benefit.

1. From the words of this text we evidently perceive, that our Lord distinctly foresaw the great progress which the gospel would soon make in the world.

Some inveterate adversaries of the Christian religion, about three hundred years after our Lord's ascension, surprised and grieved at the progress it had made, and desirous, if possible, to retard and suppress it, and again raise up heathenism in its room, had the presumption to say, that the success of our Lord's doctrine had exceeded his own expectation: and that when he preached in Judea, he did not think his name and religion would prevail as they had done; but that is a false insinuation. Our Lord often spoke of the wide extent of his doctrine. Though the Jewish people, many of them, withstood the bright evidence which was set before them of his great character: and it was very likely that they would continue to harden their hearts to a great degree; he knew that would not obstruct his reputation, or his doctrine. And did more than once declare, that "many would come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, whilst the children of the kingdom, [for continued obstinacy and unbelief,] would be shut out."

When some "Greeks, who had come up [to Jerusalem] with those who came thither to worship at the feast of the passover," desired to see him, he "answered, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified," John xii. 20—23. And afterwards at ver. 31, 32. "Now is the judgment of this world. Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Beside other parables to the like purpose, he said: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of it."

This text is another clear proof of the same thing. And his prediction is delivered with some solemnity. "Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall this also that this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her."

The thing however is remarkable and extraordinary: that Jesus should attain to such renown: that the doctrine taught by him should be preached every where: and that a testimony of respect to him should be thought to deserve frequent mention, and to be long spoken of to the honour of the person, that had done it. Princes and conquerors easily transmit with honour their own names, and the names and characters of those who attend upon them, and serve them. But Jesus lived a humble, lowly life in this world, and died, as he now foresaw he should, an ignominious death. And yet he has attained to lasting, and wide extended honour and renown: and it is esteemed by many, or even by all, in many parts of the world, an honour for any to be mentioned with him, and spoken of as having shewn respect to him.

The only reason of all this can be, that he was a prophet mighty in word and deed, that he was a teacher sent from God, that his discourses were wise and reasonable, and his conduct excellent and admirable, and that after his sufferings and death, he was raised to life, and with great power declared to be the Son of God, or the Messiah, as he had said he was.

To this only can be owing the honour to which Jesus has attained: and hereby the aspersions that had been cast on him by enemies, have been wiped off. The judgments passed upon him by those who evil entreated him, have appeared to be prejudiced, false and malicious. Whatever honour they were possessed of, whatever splendour they lived in, how great soever their influence may have then been; their names are either forgotten, or are loaded with just and perpetual.

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disgrace. On the other hand, they who believed in him, who received his words, who honoured him in their minds, and shewed him respect in their actions, are spoken of as persons of distinguished wisdom and piety.

2. From this text we learn that reputation for good works is desirable, and valuable.

Otherwise, our Lord had not declared, in opposition to the censure now passed by some upon the action of this woman, that it would be celebrated by others, and that "wheresoever the gospel should be preached in the whole world what she had done, should be told for a memorial of her."

Wise men have always esteemed the good opinion of fellow-creatures a great advantage. Solomon says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than riches, and lovingkindness rather than silver and gold," Prov. xxii. 1. And again: "A good name is better than ointment," Ecc. vii. 1.

But whilst they speak of this good name, as a special advantage, they take care to intimate what things are most excellent and meritorious, that the inconsiderate may not be misled by false appearances: therefore it is said by the same wise man: "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain. But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised," Prov. xxxi. 30. Not that the two former are contemptible, but that they are inconsiderable, when compared with religion and virtue, which are much more commendable, and are likely to secure durable love and esteem.

It is an affectionate and comprehensive exhortation, with which St. Paul shuts up his epistle to the Philippians. "Finally, brethren," says he, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think of these things," Philip. iv. 8.

We may, then, quicken ourselves in the pursuit of virtue, and the practice of good works, with the hope of that acceptance and esteem, which are justly due to things right and reasonable in themselves.

It is a thing not undesirable, nor to be despised and slighted, to be praised by those who are in honour, and are justly praised; or to be esteemed by such as are greatly and justly esteemed. At the least, we may set this against the censures of the inconsiderate, the mistaken, and prejudiced: and may reckon the judgment of the knowing and serious to overbalance that of the vain and thoughtless.

To be conversant with wise and eminent men, and to be subservient to their ease, their credit, their influence and usefulness: or to approve and embrace the excellent lessons and maxims which they deliver, and yield to them due honour and respect, is very commendable. This is a part of the virtue of the woman here spoken of: and our Lord declared she should not fail of being honoured for it.

3. Another thing, which we are taught by this text, is, that some seasons and circumstances may justify uncommon expense.

Such expense there was now, and some through prejudice or interest took upon them to blame it. And a specious argument there was against it. But our Lord, who always was impartial (as his worst enemies acknowledged) who was never under the bias of favour or interest, openly vindicates it. Some said, the ointment might have been sold, and the price given to the poor. "But he said, Let her alone: why trouble ye her?——The poor ye have with you always; but me ye have not always."

Our Lord, then, without at all detracting from the obligation to relieve the poor and indigent, which he had often inculcated, justifies this uncommon expense. The reason, upon which his determination is founded, teaches, that some extraordinary respect may be fitly shewn to strangers, especially illustrious strangers.

The argument will hold with regard to any other persons of great merit and high station, and all those, to whom we are under great obligations. We may pay them all the respect we are able, with the abundance of good things with which God has blessed us.

And what our Lord delivers here upon this occasion will serve to justify the true interpretation of divers other texts. As Luke xiv. 14, 15. "Then said he to him that bad him, When thou makest a dinner, or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy rich neighbours——But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Our Lord is not to be understood to forbid entertaining friends, and

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brethren, and rich neighbours; but to teach, that we ought also to take care not to neglect and overlook the poor and necessitous, but to make a kind provision for them, and to shew tenderness to such as are in affliction. For men may live in the splendour of an exalted condition, provided they let the poor and indigent partake of their abundance. As our Lord says upon another occasion: "Give alms of such things as ye possess; and behold, all things are clean unto you," Luke xi. 41.

We may reasonably take it for granted, that the woman, who now indulged herself in a costly profusion upon Jesus, was also ready to other good works, and often bountiful to the poor.

Upon the whole, the Christian doctrine does not require a mean and sordid spirit: but enlargeth the mind, and teacheth that discreet moderation in all things, and those tender regards for the poor and indigent, which may leave room for some enlargements upon ourselves and others, on great and extraordinary occasions.*

4. What this woman now did in anointing the body of Jesus was very commendable.

If any should ask, what could there be commendable in such an action, I should answer: I wish myself able to display all its excellencies. Our Lord said, that "wherever the gospel should be preached, this also which she had done, should be told for a memorial of her." Which may satisfy us, that it deserves to be celebrated. Indeed, I think, the virtues, which were then in exercise in her mind, and which formed this action, were more fragrant, than her ointment, though that too was very precious, and "the odour of it filled all the house."

The ointment, made use of by her, was reckoned very valuable by those who were present, and the expense extraordinary. I suppose it was so, and far exceeding what she usually expended on herself, or friends, at other times. But then the greater respect does she appear to have had for Jesus. If the woman spoken of by the first two evangelists, be the same with her, of whom St. John writes, (as is very likely) she was Mary sister of Lazarus. And we can form a tolerable notion of the circumstances of his family. He is never called a pharisee, a title seldom given to any but men of substance, and credit in the world. And when he died, and was buried, though extremely dear to his sisters, his funeral was very frugal. When our Lord came to his grave, which "was a cave, and a stone lay upon it, he said: Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him, who was dead, saith unto him: Lord, by this time he stinketh. For he has been dead four days," John xi. 38, 39. His body therefore had not been embalmed, nor laid in sweet spices. There can be no reason to think then that this family were people in opulent circumstances, but rather of a middle rank only, and private condition.

Mary however had a vessel of rich ointment. Whether it was a treasure that had been long in the family, or whether she had procured it lately for this purpose, we need not say, and cannot determine. But being possessed of a box or vase of ointment, of the richest sort, she thought, she could never bestow it upon a more worthy object. Possibly, she was under apprehensions, from what she had heard him say of his departure out of this world, that it was expedient to lay hold of the present opportunity, lest another should not offer for shewing respect to so great a person.

She had a pure, sincere, ardent love and esteem for the Lord Jesus. Her mind was filled with gratitude for benefits conferred by him on herself, or her relations and friends, some temporal, some spiritual, and upon these she set the greatest value. She considered him as the Saviour of the world, and the greatest benefactor to her, and those beloved by her, that ever she had hitherto known, or should know in time to come.

All this will be readily apprehended to be true of so pious a woman as Mary, who by the gracious and wonderful interposition of the Lord Jesus had received her dear brother alive after he had been dead four days.

Her esteem for Jesus was judicious, and determined, well grounded, and unalterable. She was persuaded he was the Christ, the chosen of God. She knew it from the prophets, from his own most excellent words, and from his mighty works. And his conduct had been admirable, lovely and engaging, beyond expression. She believed he had the words of eternal life: and she would never cease to esteem him, and trust in him, whatever change there should be in his outward circumstances; or however basely and despitefully some others might think fit to treat him.

* If this sermon be too long to be read at once, here may be a good pause.

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She had a higher idea of the dignity of Jesus, than most others had, and thought no testimony of respect could be too great to be shown him. Some, who possibly were not destitute of all regard for him, made computations of the value of the perfumed ointment, and thought the use she made of it no better than mere waste. But she having brought the vessel, and opened it, poured it forth without reserve upon Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair. All this was done by her in the presence of many people, who were come to see Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead. Many others treated him as a mean and ordinary person. She considers him, as entitled to all the respect that is due to the greatest and the wisest. And certainly, this her regard for Jesus, since it was just and well grounded, is greatly to her commendation. Faith in Jesus, as the Christ, was a virtue. She excelled in that virtue, and was eminent among the believers of that time, when the Messiah abode in person on this earth.

Nor was her faith rash and inconsiderate. It was the fruit of diligent attention, just observations, and serious meditation. All this we can say assuredly of Mary sister of Lazarus. We can collect it from a history of this family, (before taken notice of) related by St. Luke, though he has said nothing of that action, which we are now considering; where he says, that when Jesus, in his journeyings, came to the village where they dwelt, "Martha received him into her house." Whilst she was busy in preparing for the entertainment of Jesus, and the company with him, "Mary sat at Jesus's feet, and heard his word. Martha being cumbered about much serving," came to the Lord Jesus, and requested that her sister might "help her." He answered "that Mary had chosen that good, [or better] part, which should not be taken away from her," Luke x. 38—42.

Finally, she manifested courage and resolution in this action, and with a readiness of thought, that is exemplary, she laid hold of the opportunity. Some resolution was needful, to exceed the common measures of respect, that were usually paid to Jesus. She actually met with rebukes, that were discouraging: but our Lord interposed, and forbad the giving her any trouble, and declared, that this action should be long and often mentioned to her honour.

These virtues, as seems to me, were in the mind of this woman at that time. I presume, I have not extolled this action beyond what it deserves. I have had no such design, though I have been willing to do justice to it, and to carry on the fulfilment of our Lord's prediction, "that wheresover the gospel shall be preached, there also this, which this woman had done, should be told for a memorial of her."

But something still remains. It is not enough, that we celebrate, or acknowledge the good dispositions of this woman. We are to imitate the virtues, which we admire in others. She behaved commendably in her day. We are to do so in ours. She lived in the days of the Messiah, when he abode on this earth. She saw, and heard him. She was attentive, and open to conviction. She discovered his merit, and the evidences of his high character, and loved and honoured him as such, when many others despised and rejected him. And, as we have good reason to believe, was discreet and virtuous in the whole of her conduct, and so approved herself to be a true disciple of Jesus.

We also live in the days of the Messiah, which are times of greater light and knowledge, than any former times. He is not now on this earth. Nor have we seen him. But we have good reason to believe in him, and love him. The objects of faith are now increased. We believe his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven, and his exaltation to power: and have better assurance, that he will come again, and give to every man according to his work, than they had, who saw him here in person. We should behave accordingly, if we desire to be rewarded hereafter. We should be diligent in improving opportunities of serviceableness and usefulness. He who neglects to sow at the proper season, must not expect to rejoice in the time of harvest. And, as the apostle says, "he that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly. And he that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully," 2 Cor. ix. 6.

5. From this, and other passages of our Lord's life, we can evidently perceive, that, with all his great and transcendent wisdom, he did not disdain what we call the weaker sex: but allowed them to be capable of true, and distinguished worth and excellence.

He found the woman of Samaria to be a person of an inquisitive temper, and of good understanding in the things of religion. And he condescended to discourse freely with her: and more clearly declared to her his character of the Messiah, than to most others. John iv.

He openly testified his accepting the repentance of the woman, spoken of in St. Luke, as

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"a sinner," who had come into the house of a pharisee, when he sat at meat. He said to her: "Thy sins are forgiven." And for her farther assurance and comfort, added: "Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace," Luke iii. 36—50.

How acute was the woman of Canaan, and how ingenious in her importunity! And how agreeable was the answer, which in the end our Lord gave her? "O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee, even as thou wilt," Matt. xv. 21—28.

When he sat in the temple over against the treasury, and saw many rich men cast in their gifts, a poor widow woman, who cast in two mites, obtained from him the highest commendation. "Of a truth, this poor widow has cast in more than they all. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury has cast in all the living that she had," Luke xxi. 1—4.

Yea it is said, that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus," John xi. 5. Nor can there be any doubt, that they were worthy of the esteem, which he manifested for them. He had observed in them qualities of the mind, and a prudent and virtuous conduct, truly amiable and commendable. That was a happy family! They were happy in each other. They were likewise happy in the favour and friendship of Jesus himself.

And not to mention any more instances of this kind, St. Luke has particularly informed us, that as our Lord "went throughout every city and village of Judea, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, the twelve were with him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits, and infirmities: Mary Magdalen, Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered to him of their substance." Luke viii. 1—3.

And it seems, that they made great proficiency by their attendance on Jesus. They must have heard many of his public discourses, and seen many of his miracles. But they were not present, at any time, when our Lord ate the paschal supper with the disciples. Nor did they hear his affecting discourses at those seasons. And they must have been absent upon many other occasions, when he dicoursed and conferred with the disciples. In this respect it may be said, that they "partook of the crumbs only, that fell from the disciples table." Their improvements therefore are surprising. For they appear not to have fallen short of the apostles themselves in understanding, faith, zeal, and affection for Jesus.

And St. Mark, relating the conclusion of our Lord's sufferings on the cross, says: "There were also women looking on afar off. Among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James the less, and of Joses, and Salome. Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and administered unto him: and many other women, who came up with him unto Jerusalem, Matt. xv. 40, 41.

Those women therefore, who had before attended upon our Lord, persevered in their faith to the end. They attended his crucifixion, standing afar off, bewailing him. They afterwards observed, where they laid him. And early on the first day of the week came to the sepulchre, with rich spices to embalm him. And they had the honour to be the first, who saw the Lord after he was risen from the dead.

Permit me to add a thought or two more. The persons named by St. Luke and St. Mark, as following our Lord, and ministering to him, were, chiefly, women of distinction, and of advanced age. Such were those, who, together with our Lord's mother, showed him that respect. Among these I do not reckon the two sisters of Lazarus. They appear not to have attended upon our Lord any where, but at their own home, and, in the company of their brother, at the house of Simon the Leper, a neighbour in the village of Bethany, where they dwelt. The reason we do not certainly know. But it may have been owing to their age. If they were still in the days of youth, it might not be fit, that they should expose themselves abroad.

Hence we can infer, that the number of women, who believed in Jesus as the Christ, and professed faith in him, was not inconsiderable. Many of these there were, who had so good understanding, and so much virtue, as to overcome the common and prevailing prejudice. Without any bias of passion, or worldly interests, and contrary to the judgments and menaces of men in power, they judged rightly in a controverted point, of as much importance as ever was debated on this earth.

I have touched upon all these particulars, by way of encouragement to others. Despair to excel, and attain to eminence, enervates the powers of action, and obstructs those advances in knowledge and piety which otherwise might be made. High stations and public employments

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are not needful. Eminent virtue may be in any station. Wherever it is, it is discerned by the penetrating eye of Jesus, and is beheld with approbation, and will be rewarded by him in due time.

6. This text gives no encouragement to those honours, approaching to idolatry, or altogether idolatrous, which some have since given to departed saints, both men and women.

Our Lord, in this place, speaks not of any such thing. And it is inconsistent with the tenour of his, and his apostles' doctrine. But I need not enlarge upon this, in an assembly of persons, who think freely, and exercise their highest power of reason and understanding in things of religion, as well as about matters of less moment.

7. We have in this history, an instance of the favour of our Lord for virtue.

A person having performed an action, which proceeded from laudable dispositions, he expresseth his approbation of it, and declares, that it should be celebrated. We may be assured therefore, that when our Lord shall come again, to judgment, this benevolent, this remunerative property of his all-knowing and perfect mind, will be gratified, and displayed to the full. He will then bestow rewards, answerable to the riches, the honours, the delights and entertainments of this world: but greatly surpassing them, and the ideas, which we have formed from what now appears to us most splendid and magnificent.

8. And lastly, This text teacheth us to think, and judge for ourselves, and to act according to the light of our own judgment and understanding, after having taken due care to be well informed, without paying too great deference to the favourable, or the unfavourable sentences of others.

This woman met with checks and rebukes in her testimony of respect to Jesus. But he approved of it. Some acts of charity, some works of goodness, which appear reasonable and expedient to ourselves, may be preferred by us before some others, which are in more general esteem. Those we should perform, without discouraging these others, or entirely omitting them, if our ability can reach them all. But every man is the best judge of his own abilities, and what is most proper to be done by him, in the circumstances, in which he is placed, and the relation he bears to others. If we perform what appears to ourselves best and most expedient, with a sincere regard to the glory of God: and upon all occasions strive to excel in what is laudable: we need not doubt the approbation of our Lord, whose judgment is the most impartial, and the most equitable, and will secure such rewards, as are most valuable and desirable.

SERMON XXXI.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN TAKEN BY FORCE.

And from the days of John the Baptist, until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. Matt. xi. 12.

John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus with that question: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Our Lord having wrought some miracles in the sight of those two persons, as well as taught the people in their hearing, sends them back again to John in prison, saying, "Go, and show John the things, which ye do hear and see."

When they had departed, our Lord took that opportunity to speak to the multitudes concerning John, the better to remove their prejudices against himself, and the gospel-dispensation. He enlargeth upon John's character, whom they generally owned for a prophet. He tells them, that they therein judged very rightly. He was a prophet indeed, and superior to most, or any of the prophets, that had been sent to them, upon account of the doctrine taught by him: which was pure religion, recommended upon forcible motives and considerations.

"Nevertheless," adds our Lord, "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." He that shall receive my doctrine, and be a subject of the gospel dispensation, fully

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revealed and established, will excel him in the knowledge of religion in some respects. As much was intimated by John [a] himself.

It follows in the words of the text: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." As if he said: 'However 'after all, it is not every one that will attain to this excellence and dignity. Such are the 'prejudices that obtain, and such are the worldly and self-interested views of many, that it is not 'without considerable difficulty, that the blessings of this dispensation will be secured. And 'they may be said to be a sort of violent men, that enter into the kingdom of God, now setting 'up in the world.'

"For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." Hitherto, you have had the teaching of the law and the prophets. But the genuine, and sublime principles of true religion are now more clearly taught. And more self-denial is requisite to embrace them, than many are willing to practise and submit to.

There is a parallel place in St. Luke, which is in these words. "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that the kingdom of God is preached. And every man," who enters into that kingdom, "presseth into it," Luke xvi. 16. that is, forceth his way into it, by breaking through many obstacles.

It is added in the fore-cited place from St. Matthew, where our Lord is discoursing to the people concerning John: "And, if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was to come. He that has ears to hear let him hear." Which expression we never find used by our Lord, but when he says somewhat of great importance, or which men were prejudiced against, and therefore it required more than ordinary attention and honesty of mind, to admit and embrace. For though John was really very eminent, and at his first appearance raised the regard of the whole Jewish nation, they did not now so generally consider him, in his proper character of the fore-runner of the Messiah as they had done.

"The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Our Lord, by violent men, does not intend such as are injurious to others in their rights and privileges. Nor does he design to intimate, that any violence is necessary to be used against the will and disposals of God: as if hinderances were laid in the way of men's salvation by determinations of the Divine Being, secret or open. For God is ready, graciously to receive all who repent. And Jesus Christ calls and invites all in general, saying: "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden: and I will give you rest." But the force here spoken of is that resolution, which is exerted in denying ourselves, and overcoming prejudices, or acting contrary to some obstructions laid in our way by other men.

Not to enlarge any farther in a general way concerning the meaning of this observation of our Lord, I shall endeavour to explain it by representing, in several particulars, the nature of that force, which is here spoken of, and mention divers instances of the violent people here intended. After which I may add some reflections, and conclude.

I. I shall mention some particulars, which may show the nature of the force here spoken of.

1. One kind of force here intended is a resolution of mind to receive the doctrine and precepts of strict holiness and virtue, though contrary to the ordinary bias of men's appetites and inclinations.

If religion consisted only in some ritual observances, or bodily mortifications, at some certain seasons; it would not be so difficult a thing, nor very contrary to any bad habits and dispositions. But true religion, such as was taught by John the Baptist, and by our Saviour, is a doctrine hard to be received, and complied with, cordially and fully. The general strain and tenour of their preaching is, "repent:" forsake all sin: return to God, and serve him in the practice of real holiness. "When the people came to John, and asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answered and said unto them: He that has two coats, let him impart to him that has none. And he that has meat, let him do likewise," Luke iii. 11. Hard doctrine! And it requires a good deal of resolution of mind, and much self-denial, to determine to put it in practice, by parting with our all upon special occasions, or our superfluous abundance, from time to time, as the wants and exigencies of men may demand.

The same may be said of his other admonitions to publicans and soldiers, that they should

[a] Matt. iii. 11. and other places.

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perform the duties, particularly suited to their employments, and forbear the exactions, or other offences, which their way of life more especially inclined them to. Luke iii. 12—14.

Such was John's doctrine. And certainly our Lord's was of the same kind, and an improvement of it——declaring, that unless "men's righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, they could in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven," or obtain the everlasting happiness of the life to come.

Our Lord's precepts are very difficult, as they are contrary to generally prevailing affections and inclinations, enjoining purity of heart and life, meekness under provocations, and forgiveness of injuries.

Compliance with these rules and precepts he has himself compared to the parting with a valuable member of the body, saying: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee. For it is profitable for thee, that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell," Matt. v. 29, 30. And what there follows.

And in regard to the difficulty of this holy conduct, and this complete conquest, which we ought to make of irregular appetites and passions, his apostles have delivered some of their exhortations in such terms as these: "Mortify your members, which are upon the earth; and crucify the flesh, with the corrupt affections, and lusts thereof."

2. Another kind of violence intended by our Lord is the quitting favourite notions and prejudices, upon sufficient evidence, and with mature, serious and diligent consideration.

It is, undoubtedly, somewhat difficult to part with opinions that have been long entertained, and thereby to own that we were once in the wrong. Prejudices are sometimes strengthened by fond affections, which increase the difficulty of parting with them. This was very much the case of the Jewish people in general. They expected in the Messiah a glorious prince, a successful and victorious warrior, a king that should reign over them with power and splendour, and enrich them with the spoils of the nations.

They thirsted for the pleasure of being revenged upon the gentiles, the Greeks and the Romans, who had successively brought them into subjection, and laid them under tribute. And many were in expectation of some of the most profitable and honourable posts of this extensive empire. They were intent upon the external ordinances of the law of Moses; but thought little about any precepts or encouragements of internal religion and real virtue.

It must therefore have been the effect of serious consideration, that any embraced Jesus as the Messiah upon the evidence of his miracles, and the testimony of John, and such like arguments: whilst they saw nothing in him suited to the idea, which most had formed of a worldly prince. And yet there were some, yea many, who believed on him, "when they saw the miracles that he did," John iii. 2; ch. vii. 31; ch. ix. 30—33. To these our Lord imputes a laudable violence and zeal, in distinguishing themselves from the most.

All the disciples of our Lord are to be remembered here, who overcame, in part at least, at the very beginning, some prejudices: who made a profession, that he was the Christ, the Son of God, and adhered to him as having the words of eternal life: though they did still maintain hopes of seeing him appear, some time, with worldly glory.

Nathanael is a plain instance of a man, who gave up his prejudices, and false notions, upon evidence. "Philip finding Nathanael, and saith unto him: We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said: Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" John i. 45—51. Nevertheless, when Jesus had manifested extraordinary knowledge, he answered, and said unto him: "Rabbi, thou art the Son God, thou art the king Israel."

This must have been true of all in general, among the Jewish people, who at that time believed in Jesus. They did give up, in some measure, though not yet entirely, some notions that had for a while a deep rooting in their minds.

3. Another kind of violence intended by our Lord, is quitting some present worldly advantages, for the sake of the gospel, and making a profession, of the truths of religion, against much opposition, and notwithstanding difficulties and discouragements.

This kind of violence was practised by many, if not all Christ's disciples, whom he chose to be his apostles. They had at first, in believing in him, as before said, yielded up some prejudices and wrong notions, in part at least. And in obeying his call, to follow him, and attend upon him, they resigned some earthly advantages. They left their employments, the ordinary means

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of their subsistence. And they would be, for the most part, removed from the society of their friends and relatives. They never were great in the world. Yet they practised a self-denying part for the present. And Peter once said to our Lord: "We have left all and followed thee. What shall we have therefore?"

All who then believed in Jesus, and made a profession of his being the Christ, must have withstood some opposition, and met with difficulties and discouragements. They went against the stream of the nation. They fell under some reproaches, by believing in one as the Messiah, who made so mean an appearance in this world. Some who did not openly, and upon all occasions, acknowledge him, did at some seasons show considerable resolution. Nicodemus, who at the first came to Jesus by night, spoke in his favour, in the Jewish council; for which he was checked and insulted, as very ignorant. "They answered, and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet," John vii. 51, 52. And he joined with Joseph of Arimathea, in giving our Lord an honourable burial after he had been crucified, ch. xix. 39, 40.

I need not now observe particularly, in how remarkable a manner the apostles of Jesus, and the first believers at Jerusalem, practised the violence here spoken of, after his ascension, when they professed, or taught in the name of Jesus, under the greatest difficulties. Nor need I stay to show, how the kingdom of heaven was taken by violence afterwards, and how the violent took it by force, for a long while, under heathen emperors: when professing the Christian religion was prohibited by edicts: and it could not be embraced, but with manifest hazard of life itself, and all that is dear in the world.

4. Another thing very probably intended here, is the willing forwardness, and resolute zeal of many in embracing the principles of true religion, and entering into the kingdom of heaven, who, to outward appearance, were the most unlikely of any, to have a share in the blessings and privileges of the gospel.

Here I shall mention three sorts of persons: men of mean rank, and low education: men of unreputable character, and of a sinful, vicious course of life: and the gentiles.

1.) I observe here the forward and resolute zeal of men of mean rank.

Our Lord did not require assent, without sufficient evidence, that his doctrine was from heaven. Indeed, he gave abundant proof of it. But it was reasonable to expect, that men of a liberal education, and of experience in the world, and in easy circumstances, should first discern the evidences of truth and yield to them. It might therefore have been expected, that the scribes and pharisees, should first of all have owned our Lord's character, and have perceived, that the works done by him were works of divine power. In Jesus also were fulfilled many ancient prophecies. And it might have been thought, that the scribes and pharisees, versed in the law, should have first discerned this fulfilment. But yet, instead of this, they were, generally, the meaner people, who believed in him, and publicly professed him.

Of this number were most, or all our Lord's disciples, men of mean employments, and low education, though not poor or destitute. Such were most of the rest, who believed in him. These were the men, who most admired the wisdom of his words, and the greatness of his miracles. As St. Matthew observes at the conclusion of the sermon on the mount. "When Jesus had ended all these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine. For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes," Matt. vii. 28, 29.

This is the more remarkable, and the more properly styled by our Lord, "taking the kingdom of heaven by force," because the scribes and pharisees, the more knowing, and the more powerful men of the nation, did all they could to discourage the people, by many insinuations to the prejudice of Jesus. And hereby and by other means, as our Lord told them, "they shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. They neither went in themselves, neither suffered they them that were entering, to go in." Matt. xxiii. 13.

In this respect also the man born blind is to be reckoned among them that took the kingdom of heaven by force. Notwitstanding the disadvantages which he had lain under, by his total and early blindness, and notwithstanding the meanness of his condition, he withstood the arguments as well as threatenings of the Jewish council: and insisted upon it that he who had cured him, "was a prophet," John ix. 17. They were so offended, as to excommunicate him. He nevertheless continued firm in his persuasion, and proceeded yet farther, owning Jesus to be the Christ. Ver. 35—38.

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Of this number also may be reckoned the officers of the high priest, who had been sent out to apprehend our Lord, who when they returned, and were rebuked for not bringing him, answered, "Never man spake like this man," John vii. 46.

2. Among the people of a forward and resolute zeal we must place some men of unreputable characters, and a bad course of life. These might be thought less likely than others. And yet some of these embraced the doctrine of true religion, and entered into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore it is said: "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, not being baptized of him," Luke vii. 29, 30. That is, there were more of the publicans, and mean people, who came to John's baptism, and who also heard Christ gladly, than of the scribes and pharisees. The publicans were reckoned men of a sordid and unreputable profession. And though they were most of them Jews by birth and religion, the pharisees, and many others disliked them for collecting the Roman tribute, and would not willingly converse with them, or sit at table with them.

Among these was one of our Lord's disciples, who upon the call of Jesus, "left all, and followed him," Luke v. 28.

Another remarkable instance is "Zaccheus, who was the chief among the publicans. He sought to see Jesus. And afterwards received him joyfully. When the multitude saw this, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." But he was a true penitent, and so sincere and warm was his zeal, "that he gave the half of his goods to the poor," Luke xix. 2—8; and engaged to make ample restitution, if he had wronged any in the way of his employment.

There is also recorded in the gospels a notable instance of a person of a sinful course of life, who came to our Lord, and showed proofs of repentance, and paid him the highest tokens of affection, respect and honour: and all this without the approbation, or leave of the pharisee, at whose house Jesus then was, and contrary to the rules and maxims of the governing sect among the Jewish people.

3. Among people of a forward and resolute zeal are to be reckoned the gentiles, who seemed not so likely to embrace the principles of true religion. But they also took the kingdom of heaven by force.

There were some early and remarkable instances. A centurion, whose servant was sick of the palsy, sent messengers to our Lord. "Jesus said he would come, and heal him. But the centurion answered, and said: Lord, I am not worthy, that thou shouldst come under my roof. Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Whereupon, it is said, that "Jesus marvelled, and said to them that followed him: I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," Matt. viii. 6—10.

The woman of Canaan is another of these violent people, of whom our Lord here speaks in the text, who pressed into the kingdom of heaven, and strove to partake in its blessings and privileges. "She cried unto him, saying: Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Our Lord was pleased to try her faith, that the truth and eminence of it might be unquestioned. "But he answered her not a word: His disciples came, and besought him, saying: Send her away, for she crieth after us. But he answered and said: I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Yet she is not discouraged. "Then came she, and worshipped him, saying: Lord, help me. But he answered, and said: It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. And she said: Truth, Lord. Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs, which fall from the children's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her: O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee, as thou wilt," Matt xv. 22—28.

And so it was also afterwards. When the kingdom of heaven was more fully manifested to men, upon the ascension of Christ, and the publication of the gospel to the gentiles, there were more of these who believed, and came into the kingdom of God, than of the Jews: though the gospel was first preached to them, and though the unbelieving Jews, every where, did all that lay in their power to obstruct the reception of the gentiles, and forbad the apostles to preach to them, "that they might be saved," 1 Thess. ii. 16.

I do not stay to allege proofs, or instances of this, out of the Acts, or the Epistles, where they may be easily found. I shall only refer to Acts xiii. 42—48; where is the account of the preaching of Paul and Barnabas in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. "And when the Jews

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were gone out of the synagogue, the gentiles besought, that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting, and blaspheming. But the gentiles rejoiced, and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as were ordained," or disposed, or prepared, " for eternal life, believed."

All which was often prophetically represented beforehand by our Lord in divers of his beautiful parables. With regard to this event, he also said: " The first will be last, and the last first." And after the commendation of the centurion's faith: " I say unto you, That many shall come from the east, and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom," who had so many superior advantages, " shall be cast out into outer darkness."

Thus I have endeavoured to explain the nature of the violence, which our Lord here speaks of, and have mentioned some instances of it.

To use the words of a pious and pathetic writer,[a] upon this subject: ' Now it was, that ' multitudes should throng and crowd to enter in at the strait gate, and press into the kingdom: ' and the younger brother should snatch the inheritance from the elder: the unlikely from the ' more likely: the Gentiles from the Jews, the strangers from the natives, and publicans and ' sinners from the scribes and pharisees. Who like violent men shall by their importunity, ' obedience, watchfulness and diligence, snatch the kingdom of heaven from those to whom it was ' first offered.'

Application. I shall now conclude with a few remarks, tending to illustrate this argument, and to confirm the explication which has been given of the text.

1. From what has been said, we may perceive, that when our Lord says, the kingdom of heaven " suffers violence, and the violent take it by force:" the primary meaning of " the kingdom of heaven" is " the kingdom of God" under the Messiah, or the gospel-dispensation. But as embracing the doctrine of the gospel, and obeying its rules and precepts, is the sure way to obtain the happiness of heaven; it is also true, that the future happiness is likely to be the portion of those who practise the zeal and resolution here intended.

2. True Christians are the most unlikely of any men, to do any wrong, or violence to others, for the sake of the honours, riches, or other advantages of this world. For they are men, who take the kingdom of heaven by violence. Truth, the principles of religion, improvement in virtue, and the future everlasting happiness, are the things they are most intent upon: for the promoting, and securing of which, they are willing to part with all earthly advantages, if the circumstances of things should require it.

3. It may be observed that the several kinds of violence which have been mentioned, as intended in these expressions, may be all found united in one and the same person. He may resolve to deny irregular appetites and affections, and bring them into conformity to the strictest rules of virtue. He may embrace the principles of religion, contrary to former prejudices, and notwithstanding external difficulties and discouragements. The same person may do all this, and likewise be one of those, who are of low condition, and who had but a mean education; and who also once was involved in a bad course of life.

4. The violence, of which our Lord speaks, may be, and still is often practised in the world. Still some may forsake errors, which had been for a while entertained, and may overcome the prejudices of early age, and gain more generous sentiments, than had been first instilled into them.

Whenever great corruptions are brought into the church of Christ, and the profession of religion, truth is not to be recovered without a great deal of resolution. The glorious reformation made in these parts of the world from the numerous and gross corruptions of the church of Rome, was a work of this kind. The violent then took the kingdom of heaven, and seized truth by force. They improved their sentiments by serious, diligent, and impartial inquiries after knowledge: when their superiors would have kept them in ignorance and error: by exerting themselves in the cause of liberty, and in favour of an open profession of truth: when princes and priests, and the majority of every religious and civil community, to the utmost of their power, supported those errors and corruptions, which had been long before introduced into the profession of Christianity.

[a] Dr. Jer. Taylor, in his Life of Christ.

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5. Once more, for illustrating this point, it may be observed, that the violence, which our Lord here speaks of, is the same thing which is recommended in some precepts, and represented likewise in figurative expressions. For it is the same, as "striving to enter in at the strait gate," and "seeking the kingdom of heaven and its righteouness in the first place." It is also represented in such parables as these: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field —the which when a man has found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it," Matt. xiii. 44, 45, 46.

Let the same laudable disposition of mind be in us. Let the same just estimation of things be the principle of our action. Let us "buy the truth" at any rate, but "not part with it," Prov. xxiii. 23, for any worldly consideration whatever. And let us hold fast our integrity, and be steady to the interests of truth, and the rules of virtue, unmoved either by the frowns or the smiles of this deceitful world. So shall we secure the true riches, and that honour, which will never be sullied.

SERMON XXXII.

VIRTUE RECOMMENDED UNDER THE SIMILITUDE OF WHITE RAIMENT.

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. Rev. iii. 18.

Virtue is in itself reasonable and excellent: and, impartially beheld in its native beauty, might attract and charm every rational being. But in this imperfect state of the human nature, thoughtless and unattentive, or engaged by mean and worthless objects, or biassed and prejudiced by some sordid affection, or the appearance of present interest; abundance of care and labour, repeated applications, and a variety of methods, are needful to excite their attention to the greatest excellence, and to enlighten and direct them, lest they mistake the truth, and pursue vanity and misery, instead of laying hold of substantial and durable happiness.

Virtues are the habits and dispositions of the mind. But invisible and spiritual things are often represented by expressions borrowed from things corporeal and sensible. There is a kind of necessity of it in the present condition. Such descriptions are of special use to affect the mind, and excite in it a regard to the loveliness of virtue: which, as it is valuable, is represented by riches: as it is ornamental, by a white or splendid garment. And because the practice of it is extremely reasonable, and is founded upon the justest notions and principles, and is therefore the truest wisdom; it is compared to what helps the sight, and enables men to discern things in a clear and proper light. These several representations do all occur in this text.

And, as the practice of virtue is in this world attended with difficulties, and good men are liable to opposition from others; their life is also represented by a warfare, and those dispositions, that are helpful to secure their success and perseverance, are recommended under the notion of armour: as in the well-known passage of St. Paul in the sixth chapter to the Ephesians.

The words of the text are a part of the message of our exalted Lord to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, and in him to the whole church: ver. 17. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." There is a gradation. It is a great thing to be rich. It is still more, to be increased or abound with goods. But it is the height of prosperity, to have need of nothing. This was their opinion of their state. And so many are apt to think of themselves, who embrace the principles of religion, and profess christianity. They suppose, that they want nothing necessary to salvation, and that they are high in the favour of God.

"And knowest not, that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

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But notwithstanding that high conceit of your circumstances, you are indeed "wretched, and miserable:" and so unhappy, as to be the greatest objects of compassion. You are "poor," quite destitute of true riches: "and blind," not having a just discernment of things, and of your own case: "and naked," wanting that righteousness, which is the proper and best clothing of men and Christians, without which you cannot appear before God with acceptance.

"I counsel thee." He might command as a master. But he rather adviseth as a friend, concerned for their welfare.

"I counsel thee, to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." To buy is to secure and obtain by prayer and entreaty, serious care and endeavour, diligent labour and pains. The seeking of wisdom is often compared to merchandise: Says Solomon: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise thereof is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold," Prov. iii. 13, 14. And he directs men to "buy the truth, and sell it not," ch. xxiii. 23. And says our Lord himself: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went, and sold all that he had, and bought it," Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

"Gold tried in the fire:" that is, the purest gold: true virtue, that true holiness, which is of the highest value: that "thou mayest be rich" indeed, not in opinion and thought only: and "mayest" also abound, or "be increased with goods."

Other texts of scripture will confirm this interpretation. "Now ye are full," says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "now ye are rich. Ye have reigned as kings without us. And I wish ye did reign, that we also might reign with you," 1 Cor. iv. 8. Again: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich," 2 Cor. viii. 9. And the same apostle directs Timothy to "charge those who are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works,——laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life," 1 Tim. vi. 17.

Thus it is common to represent wisdom and virtue, and abounding in good works, and also the heavenly happiness, by riches and treasure. When therefore our Lord says here, "that thou mayest be rich," the meaning is, that these Christians might be truly virtuous, and practise good works, and have a treasure of happiness laid up in heaven.

"And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." By this figure of "white" or splendid "raiment" is meant much the same thing that was before spoken of under the similitude of "gold." He had told them, that they were "naked," as well as "poor." In conformity to that allusive description of their wretched condition, he recommends to them to provide becoming raiment for their covering, even that true righteousness which is most comfortable, and ornamental, and acceptable in the sight of God.

"And," finally, "anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Seek also of me a clear knowledge and discernment of things, especially of the principles and obligations of religion. Then you will be able to judge rightly concerning your own case, and will understand what God requires of you, and will not take up with an empty profession only, and rely upon external privileges, as a ground of acceptance with God, and a qualification for the happiness of another life.

"I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear."

These words, as may appear from the coherence, and the general explication already given of them, will lead me to treat of holiness, or virtue, and the practice of it, under the idea of "raiment," or "white" and splendid "raiment:" in doing which I shall take the following method:

I. I shall observe some texts of scripture in which this metaphor is used.

II. I would show particularly what is meant by "white raiment."

III. I shall endeavour to show the grounds and reasons of this metaphorical allusion.

IV. After which I shall conclude with a practical application.

I. In the first place I would observe some texts of scripture, where this metaphor is used, chiefly those of the Old Testament, where there are many examples of it, which have in them such beauty and elegance, as must needs reconcile us to the use of it, and convince us of its

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fitness and propriety. In this manner is Job's commendable behaviour in the time of his prosperity described: "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me, and judgment as a robe and diadem," Job xxix. 14. The Psalmist wishes eminent degrees of holiness in these words: "Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness," Ps. cix. 17. And describing the transcendent greatness and glory of God, he says: "The Lord reigneth. He is clothed with majesty. The Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he has girded himself," Ps. xciii. 1. And, "O Lord my God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty, who coverest thyself with light as a garment," Ps. civ. 1, 2. God's appearing for the deliverance of his people, and the destruction of his enemies, is represented by the prophet in this manner: "Then his own arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head. And he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak," Isa. lix. 16, 17. Of such as prosper in their evil designs the Psalmist says: "Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain, violence covereth them as a garment," Ps. lxxiii. 5, 6. And men of a malevolent spirit are said to "clothe themselves with cursing," Ps. cix. 17.

Thus we see that the dispositions and qualifications of rational agents, with their corresponding behaviour, are often emphatically set forth by images, borrowed from the attire and covering of the body.

II. I am now to show distinctly what is intended by "white raiment."

And it is manifest, that hereby is not to be understood an outward profession of religion: for this there was among these persons. Our Lord had no need to counsel them to buy this of him. They were a church, and had an angel among them. So far from needing to inculcate upon them a profession of religion, it should seem that they were already too much opinionated upon that account. For which reason they are introduced as pleasing themselves therewith, and saying, that they were "rich, and increased with goods:" though they were indeed "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and naked."

In a parable of our Saviour, where "the kingdom of heaven," or the state of things under the gospel dispensation, is likened to a marriage feast which a certain king made for his son, he who had not on a "wedding-garment," Matt. xxii. 11, is manifestly one who made a profession of religion, and of faith in the gospel; otherwise he had not come to the feast, nor appeared among the other guests. But he wanted holiness of life, or that true faith which produces good works.

Nor are we hereby to understand barely an observation of the positive rites and institutions of the Christian religion. For that may be reckoned to be included in what has been already mentioned, a full profession of religion, in which this church does not appear to have been defective. It cannot be supposed, that by "gold tried in the fire," or a "white raiment," our Lord should intend no more than the observation of some external rites and ordinances. For in the course of his preaching he solemnly and distinctly declared, that "unless men's righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, they shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. v. 20. And if religion consist in external rites: if the observation of any positive appointments be that "wedding-garment," which renders men fit for the kingdom of heaven: it may be said, that our Lord has but indifferently consulted the honour and interests of religion, by substituting a small number only of such appointments, and those very plain and simple, in the room of the numerous, expensive and showy ceremonies of the law of Moses. Nor would it then be so hard to be saved, or so difficult to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and to walk in the way to life, as he continually represented it to be in his most excellent discourses.

What is this "white raiment," or the "wedding-garment," we are expressly told in the eighth verse of the nineteenth chapter of this book of the revelation, where it is said to be "the righteousness of the saints."[a]

That is a summary and general description of this "white raiment." And from the many exhortations to virtue, in the New Testament, conveyed under this similitude, it appears to be composed of all the virtues and excellencies that can adorn the life of a Christian. It is there-

[a] 'That is, "the righteous acts of the saints." So δικαιωματα evidently signifies.' Doddridge upon the place.

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fore very frequent for the apostles to speak of "putting off," or laying aside "evil works" and habits, and "putting on Christ," the habit or dress of a Christian: which is the "white raiment" here recommended.

So says St. Paul to the Romans: "The night is far spent. Let us cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour," or dress, "of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day," with a becoming decency: "not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," Rom. xiii. 12—14. And to the Galatians. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," Gal. iii. 27, the habit of a Christian. To the Ephesians in like manner. "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 22, 24. And very particularly, and at large in the epistle to the Colossians: ch. iii. 8—10, and 12—14.

St. Peter has an exhortation to Christian women in this allusive way: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves." 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4; comp. 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. And he has an exhortation to all in general; "And be ye clothed with humility," 1 Pet. v. 5.

This is the "white raiment, the wedding-garment," recommended to Christians, sobriety, modesty of speech and behaviour, tenderness of spirit, bowels of mercy, humility of mind, gentleness, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness, love, and all its works and offices, which are so agreeable and ornamental.[a]

III. Which brings me to the ground and reason of this allusive way of speaking.

But precise exactness in accounting for such a form of speech should not be expected. Let then these few following thoughts suffice for showing the reason and origin of it.

1. The allusion is partly founded in the ornament that clothing gives the body. In like manner the temper, or the practice of virtue, is exceeding amiable and ornamental, and puts a grace and lustre on men. In places before cited, Job speaks of his putting on righteousness as a diadem. And St. Peter recommends meekness and quietness of spirit as ornamental. Solomon speaks of Wisdom's rules, and obedience to them, as an "ornament of grace unto the head, and chains about the neck," Prov. i. 9.

2. This allusion is founded in the fitness and disposition for society which clothing gives to any person. Man, by his reasonable nature, is designed for society. And the first foundation of politeness is laid in the garments that cover nakedness. Without clothing no one is fit for society. A rich and becoming dress procures admission into the best company: nor is one in filthy garments dressed for a wedding feast, or the entertainment of a prince. In like manner envy, pride, conceit, and other evil affections, make men unsociable: whereas humility, meekness, gentleness, and mildness, render men agreeable and entertaining.

Consequently this allusion serves to shew, in a lively and affecting manner, the necessity of real holiness, in order to delightful fellowship with God, and admission to his presence, and the glorious entertainment he has prepared for his people.

As he, who in an improper dress intrudes into a royal entertainment, is turned out for that very reason; so all, destitute of righteousness, will be excluded from the kingdom of heaven. A profession of religion, or a desire of glory and happiness, is not sufficient. Any one may wish to partake in a princely entertainment: but with such wishes there should be also some care to be a worthy and acceptable guest. If we "follow peace with all men, and holiness, we shall see God," Heb. xii. 14, not otherwise. They who add works to faith, and they only, are justified in the sight of God. And, as St. Peter assures us, if we "give all diligence to add to faith virtue, and knowledge, and brotherly kindness, and charity, an entrance will be ministered to us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. i. 5—11.

[a] They who find this sermon too long to be read at once, may make a pause here.

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IV. APPLICATION. I come now to the application, which will be in these three particulars: that we should hearken to the counsel in the text, and buy of Christ this white raiment. They who obtain this raiment ought to prize it, and likewise to keep it well.

1. Let us hearken to the counsel here given by Christ, and buy of him this white raiment.

Let us view him in his life, and in his death. Let us be at the pains of considering seriously the spiritual and heavenly nature of his doctrine, the concern he has shown for our welfare, and the end of all his humiliations and sufferings, which is, that he might "purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. If we attend to these things, we shall be convinced, that he who is destitute of virtue and good works, ought to reckon himself as wretched and miserable in a spiritual sense, as he who is destitute of necessary clothing; and that we must add to a fair and open profession of the principles of religion the lustre of a holy life and conversation.

Let us observe St. Paul's exhortation to the Colossians, where he recommends so many virtues: and let us see how we may learn them of Christ, or buy of him this white raiment.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness," Col. iii. 12. Labour after a kind and merciful disposition, and let every virtue appear in your conversation. Put them on as your clothing, without which you would not willingly be at any time surprised. And for this end consider that you have experienced great mercy from God, through Christ Jesus. He has brought you out of a state of darkness into great light, and has made you his people, who once were far off. God clothes himself with goodness, as his garment. And the ordinary course of his providence is beneficial to the human race in general: but you have obtained some distinction by being brought into the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ. And are therefore under especial obligations to do those things which are agreeable to his will.

"Put on," particularly, "bowels of mercies." If any among you are afflicted and distressed, do you, who are at ease, and have ability, sympathise with them, bear their burdens, tenderly compassionate their case, and afford them help and relief, proportioned to their exigence.

"Put on" also "kindness." Be not fierce and severe towards any, but be affable in your discourse, courteous in your behaviour: show, in all things, such mildness and tenderness, as by no means to discourage and grieve those you converse with, especially such as are of a broken and afflicted spirit.

"Humbleness of mind." Be willing to condescend, and to behave, as inferiors, toward those who ought to serve and honour you: even as Jesus Christ was among his disciples, and others, "as one that serves," Luke xxii. 27.

"Meekness:" Not resenting every injury done you, but quietly submitting to some ill-treatment, rather than disturb the peace of your society.

"Long-suffering:" Enduring many and repeated offences, without being provoked to wrath and revenge.

"Forbearing one another:" Mutually bearing with one another's failings and weaknesses, from which none are entirely exempt.

"And forgiving one another if any have a quarrel against you:" And even forgiving and forgetting injuries, and being willing to be reconciled again, though differences may have arisen, and subsisted for some time. Of this also, however great the condescension may seem, you have a pattern in God's dealings with you. And no more is expected from you to others, than you have experienced from Jesus Christ. "Even as Christ forgave you, so do ye."

"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfection:" And upon all these put true, and undissembled, and ardent love; which, as a girdle, may encompass and bind you all about, as one body, and secure a complete and amiable harmony and union in the several parts of your society.

By humble and earnest prayer, by a sincere resolution to deny yourselves, as to some present advantages, by often and carefully viewing the example of Jesus, and the whole of his transactions from the beginning to the end, in his humiliation, and abasement on earth, and in his glory and exaltation in heaven, you may buy and obtain of him this white raiment, that you may be clothed, and may walk with him in white, and be among the noble and honourable of his kingdom.

2. They who have obtained this "white raiment," the wedding-garment, ought to prize it.

Never therefore suffer yourselves by scoff and ridicule to be put out of countenance in it. A rich and costly dress may be depreciated by those who want it. And it may excite the envy

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of some others. But it fails not to procure respect from many. By this clothing you are in some measure fit for fellowship with God, and Christ, and for the society of perfect spirits.

It will never cause pride in your own hearts, nor excite to a lofty deportment toward others. But the real excellence of it may fill you with a modest consciousness of the worth and dignity which God has put upon you. It is a garment properly your own, which no one can deprive you of without your consent: which you have obtained by prayer and meditation, watchfulness and circumspection, abstinence and self-denial: which therefore you have received from Christ himself. And by wearing it, and appearing in it, as his disciples, you will do him honour and respect, which he will accept and reward hereafter.

3. Lastly, they who have received from Christ this white raiment, should be careful to keep it well.

Amidst the representation of great afflictions and trials it is said in this book: "Blessed is he that keepeth his garments," Rev. xvi. 15. He who is richly clad, is under especial obligation to a strict care of his garment, that it may be unsullied. In our conversation in this world, without particular care, this garment will contract some disagreeable defilement. And in so rich a dress it cannot be overlooked. As a little folly is observed in him, who is in reputation for wisdom, so every the least spot is discernible in a white garment.

In our walk in this world, amidst a variety of characters, we must have our eye about us, and take heed to ourselves, that our meekness be not tarnished by hastiness of speech or action, and that no spot of pride or ambition, or inordinate affection for earthly things, stain the purity of this raiment.

This may be thought difficult; but it is not impossible. It is taken notice of at the beginning of this chapter, to the advantage of some: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments." It is added: "And they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." Which also shews, that care and watchfulness, on which so much depends, though somewhat tedious at present, will be fully rewarded in the end.

Well then, "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame," Rev. xvi. 15. Blessed is he who maintains his watch in every station and condition, and in all the dangerous temptations of this life.

In the warm beams of prosperity this white raiment is very apt to fade: and it can scarcely bear them in an intense degree, especially for a long season, and without interruption. In some easy circumstances likewise extraordinary care may be needful, that it be not lost in a deep sleep of security. Happy is he who then "watches, and keeps his garments," that no man rob him of that which is his chief glory and ornament, and which he cannot lose without being filled with shame and confusion.

Happy likewise is he who is provided with the double clothing of fortitude and patience: so that he is not afraid for the cold of adversity, nor for the tempests of affliction and persecution. That is another very dangerous circumstance. But it usually awakens attention, and is often cleansing and purifying. And our Lord adds immediately after the words of the text: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

In fact, many "have gone through great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," Rev. vii. 14. By a steady faith in their great Lord and pattern, whom they have been made to resemble in sufferings, they have become like him in meekness and patience. And in those suffering circumstances, the most displeasing and affrighting to carnal apprehensions, their robes have become resplendent: a part of the heavenly glory has seemed to descend upon them: the beams of which have enkindled a flame of divine love in the hearts of others, which has inspired them with a holy ambition of sharing with those followers of the Lamb in sufferings, and resembling them in virtue: that they may also partake of their uncommon comforts here, and their peculiar rewards hereafter.

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SERMON XXXIII.

THE GREAT MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory.—1 Tim. iii. 16.

For discerning the coherence we need look no farther back than to the fourteenth verse. "These things," says the apostle, "write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know, how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

This clause seems to be added with a view to excite the care, circumspection, and diligence of Timothy: considering the vast importance of the doctrine of the gospel committed to him. Which also justifies the concern of the apostle for the right behaviour of this evangelist, and the care he took to send him proper advices and directions, and engage his due regard to them.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." As if he had said: 'Do not 'therefore think me too minute and particular, or too earnest and importunate in the directions 'which I send unto you. For it is confessed, and acknowledged by all who are acquainted with 'it, "that the mystery of godliness is very great," weighty and important.'

Thus we are coming to the difficult part of our undertaking to explain these words: and indeed it has no small appearance of difficulty. But yet I would suppose, and am apt to think, that the things here intended by the apostle are clear and obvious points, often said in the books of the New Testament, in other places: and understood and acknowledged by all, who are well acquainted with the Christian doctrine, and its evidences, as contained in the scriptures. The obscurity therefore of this text, I presume, arises from some particular expressions here made use of.

It appears to me very likely, that by "the mystery of godliness" is meant the gospel-dispensation, or the doctrine of the gospel in its extent and purity: as containing the design of God concerning the salvation of men, in and through Jesus Christ, without the works, or the ritual and peculiar ordinances of the law of Moses.

We may be confirmed in this interpretation by observing some of the many places, in which the word "mystery" occurs in the epistles of this apostle. Rom. xvi. 25, 26. "Now unto him, that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."

Eph. i. 9, 10. "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he had purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ."

Eph iii. 2—5. "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery,——which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." And afterwards in the same chapter, ver. 8, 9. "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God."

These texts plainly shew, that by the "mystery," the apostle often means "the" whole "dispensation of the gospel," with its unsearchable riches, and abundant grace and mercy:

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always determined in the purpose of God, but fully revealed to men in these late ages of the world.

Once more in the same epistle. Eph. vi. 19, 20. " ——and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak."

To the like purpose in the epistle to the Colossians, which we have often observed to have a great agreement with that to the Ephesians. Col. i. 25—27. " Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God, even the mystery which has been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you the hope of glory."

And ch. ii. 2. " ——that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, even the Father, and of Jesus Christ."

And ch. iv. 3. " Withal praying for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ: for which I am also in bonds."

And in this very chapter, the third of the first epistle to Timothy, ver. 8, 9. " Likewise must the deacons be grave,——holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."

There can be no doubt then, but that by " the mystery of godliness" the apostle means the evangelical dispensation, or the doctrine of the gospel of Christ, which he oftentimes calls " a mystery, the mystery of the gospel, the mystery of the faith;" and here " the mystery of godliness."

To the like purpose in the sixth chapter of this first epistle to Timothy. Ver. 2, 3. " If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing." And the epistle to Titus begins in this manner. " Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness."

This doctrine of the gospel, the apostle says in the text, is " great," unquestionably so. " And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." By " great" meaning, as we may reasonably think, every thing, which can be comprehended in that character. It is weighty and important: it is sublime: most true and certain: in all respects worthy of God, and carrying in it the best and kindest design toward men: most likely and most effectual to reclaim them from sin, and bring them to God and true holiness here, and to durable and unmixed happiness hereafter. Upon the comparison too it surpasseth in glory, riches, and grace, all former dispensations. Finally, it may be said to be great, as it was unsearchable, exceeding all that had entered into the heart of man to conceive: though fully determined by the Divine Being, and often hinted and foretold in the revelations of the prophets, in the more early ages of the world.

Thus far we seem to have proceeded with a satisfactory evidence and perspicuity, as to the meaning of the words.

It follows. " God was manifest in the flesh." Here we have a difficulty well known to learned Christians, and the laborious and diligent interpreters of scripture. For whereas we have in our text, " God was manifest in the flesh:" some think we should read, " Which was manifest in the flesh."

In favour of the reading last mentioned it is alleged, that it is found in divers ancient versions, and in several Latin authors. On the other hand, in favour of our present, and more common reading, it is said, that it is in most, and well nigh all Greek manuscripts that we know of. It is likewise observed, that several of the expressions which follow, are more properly used of a person than of a thing. For instance: of " the mystery of godliness," it cannot be so properly said, that " it was manifested in the flesh:" nor that it was " received up into glory."

Without deciding this point, I shall now proceed to explain the several following expressions of the text. And I suppose it will appear, that which soever of these two readings we follow, the meaning is much the same.

The first thing here affirmed, whether the subject be " the mystery of godliness," or " God," is, " was manifest," or manifested " in the flesh." And certainly, the connection is very good,

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understanding this to be spoken of the former of the two. And how it may be said, appears from many of the texts before alleged, when it was shewn, that by "the mystery of godliness," is to be understood the evangelical dispensation, or the doctrine of the gospel. For in those, and other texts, the apostle speaks of "the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest:" and, "the mystery, which had been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest unto his saints. The mystery of godliness," or the doctrine of the gospel, had been made manifest, by the preaching of John the Baptist, of our Saviour himself, and his apostles after him. It had been manifested "in the flesh," that is, to, and among men.

But take our present, and more common reading. "God was manifest in the flesh." And the expression will not be very difficult to be understood: the same thing being often said, and spoken of in other places of scripture. For God was manifested in the human nature of Jesus Christ. As St. John says at the beginning of his gospel: "And the word was made flesh and dwelled among us." And at the beginning of his first epistle: "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." And says St. Paul, Col. ii. 9. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" that is really and durably, not figuratively and typically, as in a bright cloud or glory, sometimes appearing under the ancient dispensations. The same apostle therefore says of Christ, Col. i. 15, that he is "the image of the invisible God." And Heb. i. 3. "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." For in him appeared the wisdom, the power, the truth, the holiness, the goodness, the mercifulness of God. In the like manner, and for the same reason, Jesus is called "Emmanuel," or "God with us," Matt. i. 23: or, as St Peter expresseth it, Acts x. 38. "Ye know, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. For God was with him."

And so far as we can perceive, those ancient Christian writers, who read "which," understood this, and also the following particulars, concerning Jesus Christ.[a]

"——justified in the spirit," or by the spirit. This is easily understood either of "the mystery of godliness," or of "God manifested in the flesh." For the doctrine of the gospel was proved and attested by many miraculous works. Or, the divine authority and mission of the Lord Jesus were proved and evidenced by the spirit. As John the Baptist declares in his testimony to him. John iii. 34. "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." And our Lord himself, Matt. xii. 28. "If I by the Spirit of God cast out dæmons, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." And compare Luke xi. 20, and John v. 36. "The works, which the Father has given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." And to the like purpose elsewhere.

The whole doctrine of the gospel, the divinity of this dispensation, and all things concerning the Lord Jesus, were confirmed by his resurrection from the dead. As St. Paul says, Rom. i. 4. "Declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead: and also by the plentiful effusion of gifts of the Spirit upon the apostles, and other believers, after his ascension, in conformity to his predictions and promises concerning that matter. So John xvi. 13, 14. "Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth——And he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me. For he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." And St. Paul reminds the Corinthians, 1 Cor. ii. 4, that he had preached to them "in demonstration of the Spirit and power." See also 1 Thess. i. 5, 6, and Heb. ii. 3, 4. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the

[a] Quod. Clar. Lat. Vulg. Syr.——Hieron. Fulgentius aliique Latini. Qui tamen omnes cum Græcis in eo consentiunt, quod partem hanc cum sequentibus in Christi personam interpretentur. Mill. in loc.

So Mill. I shall put down here the passages of some early Greek writers, who have referred to this text, and understood it of Jesus Christ.

Ου χαριν απεστειλε λογον, ινα κοσμω φανη· ος υπο λαων ατιμασθεις, δια αποστολων κηρυχθεις, υπο εθνων επιστευθη. Ep. ad Diognel. p. 501. D. Paris.

Ω μυστηριον. Μεθ ημων ειδον οι αγγελοι τον Χριστον, προτερον ουχ ορωντες. Clem. A. C. vii. Hypot. citat. ab Œcum. in loc. Vid. Clement. Fragm. ap Potter. p. 1015. et J. Ittig. Bib. PP. p. 162.

Εαν δε ο εμος ιεσους αναλαμβανεσθαι εν δοξη λεγηται. Orig. Contr. C. l. 3. p. 129. Cant. 467. C. Bened.

See Vol. i. p. 350, 569.

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Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him: God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will." And St. Peter 1 Epist. i. 12. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired——unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." That is, "justified by the Spirit."

It follows: "seen of angels:" which also may be well understood of "the mystery of godliness." For St. Peter, in the place just cited from him, says of the ancient prophets, "that they did minister the things," which had been lately "reported:——which the angels desire to look into." And St. Paul, Eph. iii. 9, 10. "To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God——To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

Understand this article of "God manifested in the flesh," or in the human nature of Jesus Christ. And then we may suppose to be hereby meant the appearances of angels at our Saviour's nativity, their ministering to him after his temptation in the wilderness, and upon divers other occasions, and particularly their attendance on him at his resurrection and ascension.

"Preached unto the Gentiles:" that is, to all the world, not to Jews only, but to Gentiles also. This, as every one immediately perceives, may be properly said either of the mystery of godliness, or of the divine manifestation in the person of Christ. The doctrine of the gospel in its genuine purity, simplicity and fulness, was preached by Paul and others both to Jews and Gentiles. And "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. v. 19.

"Believed on in the world." It met with acceptance, and had great effects all over the world. This may be fitly understood of either of the two subjects so often mentioned. Says the apostle to the Romans, i. 5, 6. "By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name. Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. ii. 14. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." And Col. i. 5, 6. "We give thanks to God for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the truth of the gospel: which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it does also in you, since the day ye heard it, and knew the grace of God in truth."

Finally, "received up into glory." If this be understood of "the mystery of godliness," or the doctrine of the gospel, the meaning is, that it was gloriously exalted: inasmuch as thereby the knowledge of God had been spread over the earth, more than by reason alone, or any former revelation: and that it had a more powerful effect and influence than any other doctrine whatever, for enlightening, sanctifying, and saving men.

But this expression may be also very properly understood of "God manifested in the flesh," meaning our Lord's glorious ascension. Acts i. 2. "——until the day in which he was taken up." And ver. 11. "they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up." Indeed the phrase, "received up into glory," taken separately, might be very properly used concerning our Lord's ascension into heaven. The chief difficulty attending this interpretation is the place in which it is mentioned, last in order: whereas the ascension of Christ preceded several things here observed: "preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world." However, possibly, this objection may be solved, by only supposing, that the apostle having begun with that particular, "God manifested in the flesh," meaning his appearance in the human nature of Christ, might choose to conclude with that which put a period to our Lord's personal presence, and visible appearance among men in this earth: his triumphant ascension to heaven, and his reception there into glory, at the right hand of God.

Thus I have represented the several senses of these expressions, and according to my ability briefly explained the whole.

And I presume, that the truth of the observation, mentioned at the beginning of this discourse, may now be more apparent; that there is nothing in this text but what is perfectly agreeable to many other texts of scripture; and that the several particulars here mentioned, are articles of

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faith received by all Christians in general; whether the subject here spoken of be "the mystery of godliness," or "God" himself.

Suppose the first. It is known and believed by all Christians, that the doctrine of the gospel was "manifested" to and among men, by Jesus Christ and his apostles: that it was "justified by the Spirit," confirmed by miracles wrought by Christ himself, and by his apostles, and others afterwards: "seen of angels," beheld by them with ready approbation, and with surprise and wonder: "preached to the Gentiles," as well as Jews: "believed on in the world," received by men of all characters in all nations: "received up into glory," gloriously exalted, greatly honoured and magnified by that reception, and by its effects in the hearts and lives of men.

Suppose this to be said of God. It is also true, and received by all Christians in general. There was an especial presence, and most extraordinary manifestation of the Divine Being in the human nature, or person of Jesus Christ, who is therefore called Emmanuel, or God with us. The divine authority of Jesus was "justified by the Spirit," by many miraculous works, and by a very plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost upon such as believed in him. He was seen and ministered to, "by angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world," and finally "received up into glory" in heaven.

APPLICATION. What remains after this paraphrastical explication of the words of the text, is an application in two or three inferences.

1. We must here see reason for praise and thanksgiving to God for the revelation of his will, and for the manifestation of himself to us in Christ, and his gospel: especially if we ourselves have not only been favoured with this discovery, but have also heartily embraced it, and reaped benefit by it. As our Lord said to his disciples, "to whom it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," and who had diligently attended to the instructions afforded to them. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them: and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them," Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

2. We may hence perceive it to be a duty, especially incumbent upon the ministers of Christ, in his church, to support and defend the true doctrine of the gospel.

It is with this view that this matter is now mentioned to Timothy. And every thing here insisted upon is very proper to engage and influence those who are in a station at all resembling his. And it is with redoubled earnestness, that the apostle renews his exhortation to this evangelist, near the conclusion of the epistle, ch. vi. 13, 14. "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession: that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of Jesus Christ."

3. And lastly, The same considerations do also in a like manner direct the conduct of all Christians in general. They should be engaged to use their best endeavours to uphold and maintain the doctrine of the gospel, "the mystery of godliness," which, confessedly, is very great.

It has been "manifested," and has been fully "justified by the Spirit, seen of angels, preached" to all nations, "believed" by men of all characters in every part of the world, and gloriously exalted by its happy fruits and effects.

After this there can be no reason to doubt of its truth. And they who have received it, ought to use all reasonable methods to preserve it pure and entire. It cannot be justly expected, that if we lose the truth, after it has been so delivered to us, God should again manifest it to us, or appoint a new series of like miracles and wonderful events to give it credit. Instead of indulging such vain expectations, we should diligently search the scriptures, and labour to know the mind of God contained therein. And "we should give earnest heed unto the things which we have heard, lest at any time," or by any means, "we should let them slip," Heb. ii. 1. And "we should earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints," Jude ver. 3. Which, as before said, will not be so delivered any more, as it once was, by Christ himself, and his apostles. Nor can any thing else be substituted in its room, that shall be equally excellent, important and beneficial.

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POSTHUMOUS SERMONS

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

THE EDITOR'S ADVERTISEMENT.

Of the following Sermons, the first four were fairly transcribed by the author, but probably had not undergone his last correction; the fifth and sixth (preached at the Tuesday Lecture in the Old Jewry) were not transcribed, but had upon them this remark: 'Perused, and so far as 'I am able to perceive, all is right; and I humbly conceive ought to be published:' the seventh was transcribed in part: the eighth and last is entirely printed from his notes, and may therefore, with the fifth and sixth, be considered as specimens of his usual compositions for the pulpit.

SERMON I.

THE RIGHT IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.—Eph. v. 16.

We find this advice twice given in St. Paul's epistles: and in both places recommended as a branch of prudence and circumspection. So it is here: "See then, that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise: redeeming the time, because the days are evil." And in like manner in the epistle to the Colossians: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time," Col. iv. 5.

Some expositors suppose, that the right improvement of time is the direct meaning and design of the expression, as used in this place: and say, that 'Redeeming is a metaphorical expression 'taken from merchants, who diligently observe the fittest time for buying and selling, and easily 'part with their pleasure for gain. So do you also deny yourselves in your ease and pleasure, 'to gain an opportunity for doing good.' Again: 'Time past, strictly speaking, cannot be 'recalled. But you are to redeem, or recover as far as possible, that time which has been lost 'by a double diligence in improving what remains.'[a]

Others think, that the proper meaning of the apostle's direction is, that the Christians to whom he is writing, 'Should secure themselves, by a prudent carriage toward all men, from the 'inconveniences of those difficult times in which they lived:' or, '"redeeming the time;" that 'is, gaining as much time as you can, prolonging your own tranquillity, and the opportunity of 'spreading the gospel. Observe a prudent behaviour toward unconverted Gentiles, and 'unbelieving Jews; that they may be as little exasperated as possible, by your different senti-'ments from theirs, or by your pure and holy life, whereby you seem to condemn and 'reproach them.'[b]

[a] Pool upon the place. The same upon Col. iv. 5. [b] Lock upon the place. To that purpose, Peirce upon Col. iv. 5.

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I shall however take occasion from these words to discourse of the right improvement of time, or "redeeming" it in a more general sense. And I shall consider them as setting before us the same practice which Solomon recommends: "Whatever thy hand findeth to do," whatever lies before thee, which is useful or innocent, "do it with thy might," with vigour and perseverance: "for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest," Eccl. ix. 10.

And indeed, if we were to suppose this exhortation connected with what precedes, we might be inclined to think, that the apostle intended to stir up these Christians to care and diligence in general, as well as to circumspection in particular, and a prudent carriage toward those who were of different sentiments, for securing and prolonging their tranquillity, and keeping off those evils which some were inclined to bring upon them. This more enlarged, and general design of the exhortation may be argued, I say, from the context. Which, if we take it in more fully than we have yet done is this: "Wherefore he says, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then, that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

The right improvent of time seems to imply two things: employing ourselves in that which is good, and doing that good with care and diligence.

I. I shall therefore in the first place show, what things we ought to be employed in.

II. And then, secondly, how we may best improve our time for those good things that lie before us.

III. To which I intend to add, in the third place, an exhortation.

I. The first thing to be considered by us is, in what things we ought to employ ourselves. Here I shall mention these several particulars.

1. "The service of God." For God is the creator of all things, and their Lord and sovereign. He it is who gives us all things to enjoy. And in him we live and move and have our being. We breathe in his air, and tread on his earth, and live upon the provisions he affords us. Every moment of our time produces fresh instances of his bounty and goodness.

He is the great governor of the whole world, not of one part or portion only, but of the whole universe; and therefore he is able, and does direct and overrule all things with a wise and almighty inspection and providence. A continued supply is made for us, and for all creatures in general. He also overrules the spirits of men, so that notwithstanding the unreasonable and exhorbitant desires of many, their violence does not break forth to disturb the general peace and tranquillity of the world: in which peace and tranquillity we have our share, and quietly enjoy ourselves, our goods, and our friends.

We should therefore very much employ our thoughts in admiring and adoring God; in praising him for his goodness, and in praying to him for the continuance of his favour and goodwill, and for every thing necessary to our comfort and happiness.

Some time will be fitly spent in secret, in meditating upon his glorious perfections, in contemplating his great and wonderful works, and in recollecting the many benefits bestowed upon us hitherto in the past stages of life.

And we should allow some time for the united and public worship of God, which is an obligation founded in reason, and is prescribed by revelation.

Can any of us think we have well employed our time in this world, if we have never, or rarely with seriousness and attention, thought of that Being, who is the most perfect, surpassing all the united perfections of the whole creation: without whom nothing would have been, of whom are all things, and by whom they subsist?

2. We ought also to employ ourselves, and improve our time in securing and advancing our own spiritual interests. We should endeavour to know the state of our own souls: what are our chief passions; what our greatest temptations. It may require some time and care to form a right judgment of ourselves. There seems to be good reason to say that few men know themselves. The heart is deceitful. Many deceive others; some mistake and are deceived about themselves.

It may not be improper therefore to allot some time for this: to consider what is the bent of our mind, in what course we are, and whither it leads: and whether our behaviour is agreeable to our profession and principles.

Our mind is ourselves, and our chief care ought to be its culture and ornament. There is

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nothing of equal importance with this. When we remove hence, when death puts a period to our present state of action and existence, we leave behind us our estates and treasures, we drop our titles, and all external ornaments. But we shall carry with us the same temper and disposition which we had here: and our works will follow us. Are we here unholy? We shall be hereafter lodged in the company of such beings, who will be torments to themselves, and tormentors to each other. Are we now proud? We shall then be abased. Are we humble? We shall then be exalted. Are we pure in heart? We shall then see God. Are we merciful? We shall then obtain mercy.

It is incumbent on us therefore to employ some time in considering the nature and obligation of those virtues and dispositions of the mind, upon which so much depends; to confirm ourselves in the love and practice of them, and to watch against temptations that might ensnare us, and carry us off from the course which leads to happiness. It behoves us, as St. Peter says, "to give all diligence, to add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to that charity: and to make our calling and election sure. For," says the same apostle, "if ye do these things ye shall never fall. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. i. 5, &c.

The obligation to these virtues seems not to lie far out of sight. But might be soon discerned, if men would be persuaded to attend, and to exercise their rational powers and faculties. However it is certainly obvious to all who are acquainted with the Christian revelation.

The importance of securing our eternal salvation is evident upon the first thought about such a matter. But we are surrounded by temptations. The things of this world make strange and sudden impressions upon us, and carry us away, sometimes, before we are aware. But he who frequently employs himself in considering the duties of his station, and the reasonableness of them, in observing the real excellence of holiness, and every branch of it, and impressing on his mind the motives and arguments there are to the practice of it, is likely to be prepared for a time of temptation, and to stand and overcome in it.

Yea a few hours, at some one time, seriously employed in considering the duties of the present condition, and the vast moment of our behaviour in this world, with respect to another state of endless duration, may be of great service for securing our choice and determination in favour of virtue. And having once found the benefit of serious consideration, it is very probable we shall be disposed to renew at some seasons the like exercise and employment of the mind.

3. Another thing, in which we ought to employ ourselves, is the business of our calling. We are not to neglect that out of sloth and idleness, nor from a pretence of minding the things of the spiritual life, nor for the sake of attending to the concerns of other men. For the business of our calling is a main part of our duty, and a fundamental obligation, upon which every thing else depends. God has so formed us, that we have many wants, which are continually renewed upon us, and which, in dependence on Divine Providence, must be supplied by our own industry and care. What good reason have we to rely upon the charity of others, if we have strength to provide for ourselves? Or what right has he to the privileges of any community, who contributes nothing to its prosperity? Yea, what man, who has any spirit, would choose to depend upon others, who can subsist by his own skill? And what wise and good man would willingly receive that, for which he has given no valuable consideration of care and labour?

I might insist, that sloth and idleness expose men to temptations of every sort. But I choose rather to observe and say, that a man's weight and influence in this world must, for the most part, depend upon skill in some calling, and diligence in it: and that the very pleasure of life is advanced thereby. How insipid are amusements to those, who know not what labour either of body or mind is! Moreover, it is in itself very desirable to have wherewithal to give to those that need. Poor and indigent persons there will always be in this world of ours. Some are left orphans in their childhood, before they can help themselves. Some labour under the decays of age. Other some experience the waste and expence of continued sickness. Some are reduced by strange and unexpected accidents. Some are unjustly plundered by violence.

He who by care and diligence, and a prudent improvement of his time, and the several ad-

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vantages that have been put into his hand by the kind providence of God, has gained wherewithal to relieve and help any such necessitous persons, has good reason to rejoice. Which leads me to another particular.

4. Some time ought to be employed in serving others. Man is naturally a sociable creature. The christian religion teaches us to consider ourselves as members of one and the same body. It is a particular and express direction of St. Paul: "Look not every man on his own things: but every man also on the things of others," Phil. ii. 4.

Some have perplexed and difficult affairs before them: and they want the assistance and the united counsels of others. If men of understanding carefully improve their time, and dispatch their own affairs with diligence, they may have leisure to advise, help, and solicit for others, in those intricacies in which they happen to be involved.

Some are weak through want of knowledge, or experience and credit in the world: and they are overpowered by men of superior might, who are artful, and skilful in carrying on oppressive measures, and then securing and defending themselves by specious pretences against the resentment due to their unjust proceedings. Will it not be an act of great virtue, to afford some help to the weak cause, when upon good grounds we know it to be right? Among those things which Job urges in his own vindication, he does not omit this part of his character: "I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause, which I knew not, I searched out. I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth," Job xxix. 15—17.

That is a grand performance; but it is reserved for those who have well improved their time in cultivating their own minds; and who know how to discharge the encumberances of their own affairs with expedition.

II. I now proceed to show how time may be best improved in these good works, and for carrying on these good designs and purposes.

1. We are to do these things with all our might. What we do, or engage in, we are to be intent upon, in proportion at least to its importance. If we are about our own work, in the business of our calling, we are to mind it, and not be slothful therein; but to do it with diligence, that it may be dispatched, and we may not be hindered from the service of God, or our neighbour.

If we are engaged in the service of God, we are to mind that, and not to suffer other things then to occupy our thoughts. Cold and indifferent services will neither be acceptable to God, nor profitable for ourselves. Do we think to obtain those blessings which we ask but faintly? Will those instructions do us any good, which we scarce regard when given? Or, have those instructors discharged their duty, who have proposed indeed reasonable admonitions, and weighty arguments, but without inward affection, or visible zeal and concern; as if the things discoursed of were indifferent, of little or no moment. It is no wonder, if the time allotted even to the worship of God runs waste, if we are unattentive and negligent.

So likewise, when you undertake any service for another, you are to do it with all your might, as if it were your own. You are to study the most proper and effectual means of succeeding that can be thought of. Whatever good cause you espouse, you are to do it heartily; for otherwise you betray, instead of promoting it.

2. Another way of improving time is to lay aside as much as possible such things as are trifling, unnecessary, and of small moment; and to contract the number and length of our recreations. Hereby we gain more time for those things which are material and important.

It is true, the mind ought to be diverted, and cannot be always intent upon great matters; but we should take care that diversions are not so indulged as to unfit us for business afterwards. This is the proper use and design of relaxation, to fit us better for things of weight. But some by giving way to amusements and diversions, by exceeding therein as to length of time, contract so light a habit, as to be disgusted at every thing grave and serious.

The body too needs to be refreshed by rest; but, certainly, we were not born to sleep only. And it has been often observed, that when that is indulged beyond the proportion which nature requires, all the powers of the bodily frame, instead of being invigorated and strengthened, are slackened and enervated.

3. Another thing that will be of service for improving, or redeeming time, is to lay hold of, and take the advantage of opportunities.

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Every one knows that this is of great importance in commerce, and in all the affairs of life. There are likewise opportunities, or special seasons for gaining religious knowledge, and advancing the good dispositions of the mind. Such is the friendship and conversation of a serious, understanding and communicative Christian. The Lord's day is an opportunity for our souls, as it is a day of rest and leisure from the cares and business of this present life. It may be reasonably supposed, that then, when we are disengaged from other things, we may give a closer attention to those instructions which are proposed to us in the public worship of God: and we may then likewise, especially in private, without inconvenience, carry on our meditations to a greater length than we can ordinarily do on other days.

There may likewise also be opportunities arising from the temper of our minds. Possibly we do at some seasons, and in some circumstances, perceive in ourselves a more ready, or a more pliable disposition than at others. These are special opportunities. We should not let them slip, but by all means take the advantage of them for adjusting maturely the great principles of reason and religion, upon which we are to act, and for settling in our minds a full persuasion of the vanity of this world and all its glories; and for confirming the resolutions of virtuous and holy obedience, which are just and reasonable.

As there are such seasons as these, favourable to our own best interests, so opportunities may offer for the serving others; either for giving them advice and counsel, or reproof, or for interposing with other persons in their behalf, and to their advantage.

4. It will be of great use for redeeming, or the right improving of time, to dispose our several affairs and concerns in good order. This contrivance and disposal of things may, itself, take up some thought and time, and seem to retard our progress for the present; but it will be amply recompensed afterwards. It will afford pleasure not to be conceived beforehand. All the perplexity of confusion and disorder will be avoided: and many things will be done and effected with ease, which otherwise would have been left undone to our own great vexation, and the loss and detriment of others.

5. Time may be upon some occasions wisely redeemed by avoiding contention about trifling things of little value.

This I apprehend to be one reason why our blessed Lord, in such emphatical expressions, recommends to men to acquiesce and sit down contented under lesser injuries and abuses, rather than withstand them, or seek satisfaction for them. "I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him two," Matt. v. 39—41.

It is a point of prudence, as well as virtue, to pass by lesser offences. Better it is to lose a small sum, than run the hazard of wasting a great deal in a long and tedious prosecution, which may never succeed at last. Or, it is better to let it go at once, without farther concern, than to spend time in the recovery, which may be employed to more advantage another way.

The like may be said with regard to many other things, which are causes of strife and difference among men. Begin not a strife about trifles, lest you should thereby be drawn into a long and ruinous contention. The observing this rule may be of great and singular use on the point before us, of redeeming time.

6. Lastly, Time is to be redeemed by a prudent, circumspect and inoffensive behaviour to all men. This is supposed to be what is particularly intended by the apostle: if so, it is of near affinity with other directions elsewhere. "If it be possible, as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all men." Rom. xii. 18. And, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God," 1 Cor. 10. 32. Solomon's observation may be reckoned applicable here, as well as upon other occasions: "A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger." Prov. xv. 1.

In this way redeem time to yourselves, for all the good purposes of life. In this way seek the prolongation of your peace and tranquillity, by avoiding all needless offence and provocation, by mildness and affability of discourse, prudence of behaviour, meekness of answer to all those who inquire after your belief, and the grounds and reasons of it. By a readiness to good offices, watching your temper, guarding against such discourses and actions, as are offensive and disagreeable to many about you, and which your peculiar principles do by no means oblige you to: hereby, I say, do you redeem and gain time for the worship of God, for your own interests, and

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for the good of your friends, and indeed for every useful design which you have at heart, and you are at all qualified for.

III. I beg leave to add, in the third place, as at first proposed, a serious exhortation, which shall consist of two parts. First, an address to persons of different ages, stations and characters: and then, secondly, some considerations by way of motive and argument.

1. Let me say somewhat by way of counsel and advice upon this subject, to persons of different ages and characters.

Are any still in a sinful course, and under the power of evil habits? Do any daily add sin to sin? They do somewhat worse than barely waste time: for they employ it to bad purpose.

Are there any who have not yet sincerely devoted themselves to God, with full purpose of heart to serve and obey him? There is somewhat yet undone, which must be done, or you are miserable beyond redress. Be persuaded to take some time to consider the course you are in. Probably, you will then see reason to alter it, and enter upon a new way of life. "I thought on my ways," says the Psalmist, "and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments," Ps. cxix. 59, 60.

They who have devoted themselves to God in Christ Jesus, may do well to consider, that their engagement to be the Lord's, implies an obligation to serve him with all their might. Good habits ought to be improved and strengthened. You are to glorify God with your soul and your body, which you have consecrated to him. You ought to stir up and awaken men to attend to the great things of religion, and their most important concerns. You are to invite and draw as many as you can into the paths of virtue and holiness. So your time of life will be well employed: and in the end you will receive from the Lord, whom you serve, a very abundant reward.

Young persons may perceive, from what has been said, how great an advantage may be made by an early dedication of themselves to God. You are in, or approaching to, the best part of life. Have you no desire that it may be employed to some good purposes? Is it not a pity that the world and you should lose your best time, and all the vigour and activity of your highest powers?

Improve then the early days of life in preparatory studies and labours for future usefulness; that you may be qualified to discharge the duties of your station with reputation and credit. How great is their happiness, if they know how to improve it, whose parents furnish them with the best helps for knowledge and wisdom, secular and religious, and who constantly watch over their conduct, and quicken and encourage their pursuit of every thing excellent and laudable! Great likewise is their privilege, who, when their nearest relatives are straitened, are kindly forwarded and assisted by others of generous minds, who liberally afford them all proper helps for attaining the knowledge suited to their rank and condition. These are accountable for such a privilege, and should improve the time allotted for attaining that skill and science, which may enable them to live comfortably in the world.

Are you in years? Have you passed the morning and noon of life? and are you drawing toward the very evening? and has all that time been wasted? It is time to think and consider, and take care to improve what remains. This every one must be convinced of; but perhaps some may be apt to despair of doing any good now. To such I would say: that regard for time past and lost, should not by any means exceed so far as to prevent the improving of what is left. As yet you have an opportunity. Nature may be impaired; but then, possibly, you have fewer avocations. And some temptations, that were strong, have lost their force. Endeavour then to do this good at last, by immediate care and diligence in the great work and business of this life, the service of God, and serious preparation for another world, to leave behind you the testimony of a full conviction, that after having tried the ways of sin, the way of holiness and virtue is to be preferred.

Are you rich and exalted in this world? You are by your condition discharged from many of the low offices of life which are performed for you by others. You may therefore employ yourselves in things of a higher nature: in contemplating the works of creation and Providence, in studying the principles of natural and revealed religion. So you may furnish your minds with a rich treasure of delightful and useful knowledge. And you may have opportunities of communicating excellent instruction to those whose mean employments hinder their making many reflections for themselves. Or, you may assist, direct, relieve, such as are in want and perplexity.

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Are you poor? By that condition of life you are especially necessitated to redeem time by assiduity and diligence in your calling. Sloth and idleness would throw you into want and distress: and at the same time dishearten others from giving you relief.

Diligence is one of the proper virtues of your station, and the chief merit you can attain to. It will therefore recommend you to the regard of others, and induce them to lend you their helping hand for your support; especially, if, notwithstanding your best care, you should come into any remarkable straits and difficulties: whereas, if, whilst you are in poor and low circumstances, you are idle and unactive, by this demonstration of a worthless mind, at least a very great defect of virtue, you check the charity even of those who are of a kind and benevolent disposition.

And let me observe, that as the nature of your condition very much engages your time and thoughts in providing the necessaries of life, you ought most carefully to improve the rest of the Lord's day for the concerns of your souls and another life.

II. Having mentioned these advices and counsels, I shall now conclude all with some considerations by way of motive and argument.

1. Consider that time is precious, and the improvement of it is of great importance. It is the season and opportunity of serving and glorifying God, and securing the eternal welfare and salvation of our souls.

Though there are special opportunities in the time of life, it may be all considered as an opportunity which God has given us of preparing and qualifying ourselves for another and better life. How careful should we be to improve that time and season on which so much depends; no less than everlasting glory and happiness, or final ruin and misery.

2. Consider that time is short and uncertain. There is no very long space between the day of our birth, and the day of our death. How strongly, by a variety of comparisons, does Job represent the shortness of human life, and the swift and irrevocable progress of time! "Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away. They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle that hasteth to the prey," Job ix. 25, 26. And in another place, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle," Job vii. 6.

3. Proportionable to your care and diligence will be your progress and improvement. So it is often seen in the affairs and business of this world. Among many who have the same or like outward advantages, he usually is the most successful who is the most diligent and punctual. In the pursuit of knowledge he likewise has, for the most part, the advantage, who best employs his time. It is the same in religion. The diligent, the watchful, the circumspect Christian, is the growing and improving Christian.

Perhaps you know some who set out with you in the Christian course. You began together with equal ardour, and have enjoyed in a great measure the same external means and helps: but yet, their improvements, you think, are by far more considerable than your's. Their knowledge of religious truths appears more distinct and clear. Their faith of invisible things is lively and affecting. They are prepared both for life and for death. They have no tormenting fears of the one, nor solicitous desire and concern for the other. Their moderation of affection toward the good and the evil things of this life, you evidently perceive, is not insensibility and stupidity: but a wise and reasonable, and determined preference of things heavenly and eternal, to things earthly and temporal.

They are seldom moved by anger: whereas you often fall into excesses of that passion. They can overlook and forget an injury, when almost every little offence produces deep resentment in your breast. They bear courageously very afflicting strokes of providence. You shrink under the weight of small burdens.

What is the reason of this? Is it not that you have too much depended upon the fervour of your first resolutions, and have much neglected the means of your progress and improvement? Whereas they have been careful in redeeming their time by frequently impressing on their minds the obligations they are under, and reviving the sense of the engagements they have entered into. They allot time for serious meditation and consideration. When they pray, or hear, or engage in other religious services, they are intent, and do it with all their might, as in the presence, and under the eye of God.

They not only read, but think. They not only hear, but recollect also, and meditate afterwards. They have not only been intent and fully engaged in their private and public devotions,

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but they have also gladly embraced opportunities of edifying conversation and conference; and have carefully treasured up many valuable observations which they have made themselves, or received from others. By these and other means they are continually on the improving hand, and grow daily stronger and stronger in the Lord.

4. For better exciting to the right improvement or redeeming of time, you may do well to observe some great examples of diligence and zeal. Such an one was the apostle Paul, who was in labours more abundant, and carried the knowledge of true religion to a vast extent in the compass of his indefatigable life. And such was Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, who, as St. Peter justly says, "went about doing good," Acts x. 38. And himself once said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, whilst it is day. The night cometh, wherein no man can work," John ix. 4. And how well every portion of the short time of his ministry was employed, we evidently perceive from the history of it in the gospels; which history, though very brief and compendious, sets before us the most eminent example of zeal for the glory of God, and the welfare of men, and of diligence in pursuing those great ends that ever the world saw.

5. Lastly, consider, that time well improved will afford comfort and peace in a day of affliction, and in the hour of death; especially, if you begin early to mind the true business of life, and proceed with steadiness in the way of religion and virtue. You will not have reason for boasting, nor will you be disposed to it. You will never be proud of your good works, but will humbly own your defects, and cheerfully ascribe the glory of what has been well done to God, the fountain of all perfection, who has upheld, guided, taught and strengthened you. But still it will be very pleasing and delightful to be conscious of those virtuous dispositions and services which God himself approves and will reward. And you may be able in the end to say with the apostle, and with a like joy and triumph: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge will give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

SERMON II.

JESUS MADE A CURSE FOR US.

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith. Gal. iii. 13, 14.

Every one knows that the main design of the apostle in this epistle, is to dissuade the Galatians from coming under the yoke of the law of Moses, as necessary to acceptance with God, and eternal salvation.

As these Christians were his own converts, and they had paid too great regard to some artful men, since come in among them; he reproves them with sharpness, and sets arguments before them with warmth and earnestness. "O foolish Galatians," says he in this third chapter, "who has bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth? before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified among you? He therefore that ministereth the spirit to you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Even as Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying: In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written: Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that

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no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, is evident. For the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but the man that doth them shall live in them. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us. For it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.

I shall first endeavour to show what is meant by Christ's being made "a curse for us:" after which we will observe the end and design of it.

1. The meaning of the expression is, that our Lord had suffered the death of the cross. "Christ," says he, "has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." The word, indeed, is harsh; but I say it truly: and I may justly so express myself. "For it is written," in the law: "cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The text here referred to, is in Deuteronomy. "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree; but thou shalt in anywise bury him that day. For he that is hanged is accursed of God: that the land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance," Deut. xxi. 22, 23.

The usual punishments among the Jews were strangling and stoning: and it is generally supposed, that by the hanging in Deuteronomy is intended the doing so after death. This appears from the preceding words, which speak of the man's being put to death before his suspension; which shows that this punishment was not exactly the same as the Roman crucifixion: for they crucified men alive, whereby they expired before they were taken down. But this was only hanging up their bodies after they were dead, exposing them to open shame for a time.

So say very judicious expositors. And if this be right, then, by our Lord's being on a cross so as to die there, he was made a curse in a very emphatical sense.

This "hanging on a tree," according to the law of Moses, was a suspension of men, after they had been put to death for idolatry or blasphemy, or some other great offence. But Jesus suffered the pain of crucifixion, and died upon a cross.

The words of the law, before cited, are, "If thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree: but thou shalt in anywise bury him that day. For he that is hanged is accursed of God: that thy land be not defiled."

That is, he is an object of execration, which ought to be taken out of the way; or he that is hanged on a tree, is an abomination; that is, the dead body of a man hung up and exposed above ground, is a thing extremely impure, and offensive, and disagreeable, and therefore it must be soon taken down and removed out of sight.

Our Lord therefore was treated as if he had been accursed and abominable in the sight of God and men.

The history of our Lord's death in the gospels is a comment upon this text, and is well known to all. He was apprehended, tried, condemned, and crucified as a criminal. And he suffered death at the common place of execution without the gates of Jerusalem.

Every one did not consider him as an offender, or guilty of any thing worthy of death. But the voice of the people, concurring with the opinion of their great council, prevailed; and the sentence was executed without abatement.

Nor should we omit to observe the word "made: being made a curse for us." He was innocent, but was treated as an offender: and that, according to the permission, will and appointment of God the Father, in which our Lord acquiesced. "Therefore does my Father love me," says he, "because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me; but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father," John x. 17, 18.

For this great trial he prepared himself by prayer and meditation. When it drew near, he earnestly requested "that the cup might pass from him:" but added: not my will, but thine be done." Prayer being ended, he rose up, and went cheerfully through the scene of sufferings that was allotted to him. So Christ was made a curse for us. Or, as it is expressed in another text: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21.

2. In the next place therefore we are to consider the ends and effects of this appointment, which are here expressed in a twofold phrase: "redeeming us from the curse of the law," and obtaining "the blessing of Abraham."

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These words may be easily understood by observing the context, which was read at the beginning of this discourse. "For as many as are of the works of the law," ver. 10. that is, who aim to be justified by the works of the law, "are under the curse. For it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" which is next to impossible: and therefore every one who adheres to the law, comes under a sentence of condemnation. "But Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law:" having set us free from an obligation to it, and taught us how we may be justified by faith, or according to the rule of his gospel.

Which is the same as the other privilege here mentioned, "that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ:" that is, that the Gentiles might be justified in the same way that he was, by faith, without the works of the Mosaic law, which were not then introduced or instituted. "Even as Abraham believed, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith," that is, who believe, as Abraham did, "the same are the children of Abraham," ver. 6, 7. and are accepted of God as his people. "And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith," ver. 8. that is, that the time would come when all men should be assured of justification and acceptance with God in the same way, "preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith," who believe, and look for justification by faith, according to the gospel, the law and rule of real, sincere holiness and virtue, "are blessed with faithful Abraham," ver. 9.

This, I think, is the design and meaning of the apostle in this place. And it is what he often teaches; that by the death and crucifixion of Christ the law has been abrogated, or rendered useless.

It is, I say, a thing which he often speaks of, as the design of Christ's death, to deliver us from an obligation to the law of Moses, and from the penalties and inconveniences hanging over them that disobeyed the ritual ordinances of it. "Even so we, when we were children," infants under age, "were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,—that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. iv. 3, 4. 5. that we might be henceforth delivered from the numerous and burdensome rites of the law of Moses, which had in them no real excellence, and that we might be treated as sons, or children arrived to maturity; and might be accepted, and have access to God in the sincere performance of a truly holy and spiritual worship and service, which is reasonable in itself, perfective of our nature, and obligatory at all times.

And at the beginning of the third chapter of this same epistle: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth:" that ye should not continue steady to the truth of the gospel, in its genuine plainness and simplicity, without Jewish rites and ceremonies? "before whom Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you:" to whom Christ's death, and the ends and designs of it, were once so clearly represented.

And in the epistle to the Ephesians, ch. ii. 14.—16. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, to make in himself of twain, one new man, so making peace. And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross; having slain the enmity thereby."

To the like purpose also in the epistle to the Colossians, ch. ii. 13—15. "And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he hath quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

In these places the apostle seems plainly to represent the abolishing of the ritual ordinances of the law, as an effect, or at least a consequence of Christ's death. But it may be asked: what influence had the death of Christ to this purpose? How did Christ redeem us from the curse of the law by suffering himself an accursed death? How did he by his death on the cross, abolish the obligation of those ordinances which are not of a moral nature?

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This question has in it some difficulty: nor did all at the time of the first preaching the gospel after our Lord's ascension discern the law to be abrogated.

Let us therefore observe a few particulars for the solution of this difficulty.

1. When St. Paul speaks of this, as having been effected by the cross of Christ, he may thereby intend the whole of his doctrine: as it is common, in many cases, to express the whole by a part.

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness:—But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. i. 18, 23, 24. For "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. He does not mean Christ's crucifixion only: for he had taught the Corinthians Christ's resurrection, and the whole doctrine of the gospel. His meaning is, that he resolved not to preach among them any philosophical speculations, but the Christian religion only, and particularly Christ's death, with all the articles depending upon it. So likewise: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus, [that is, in the dispensation by him, and according to his doctrine,] neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but a new creature," Gal. vi. 14, 15.

We may therefore understand by the cross of Christ, his whole doctrine confirmed by his death; and easily perceive, how Christ may be said thereby to have abolished the law. For he taught only the great principles of religion, and the moral precepts of real holiness, in the greatest extent and perfection, as reaching the heart. And he assured men, that they who received that doctrine, and acted according to it, would build upon a good foundation, and might depend upon acceptance with God, and future happiness.

Yea, he did himself say such things as amounted to a declaration, that the peculiarities of the law were no longer obligatory. For he taught, that no part of divine worship was any longer to be confined to the temple at Jerusalem, or any other place: that God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth: and that those evil things only, which proceed from the heart of man are defiling.

2. The ceasing of the obligation of the Mosaic institution, may be spoken of as an effect or consequence of the death of Christ; inasmuch as his death was the conclusion of his ministry, and the accomplishment of all things foretold concerning the Messiah.

As the law was designed to be a type and adumbration only of good things to come, the obligation of it ceased upon Christ's being fully manifested: who was the end of the law, to whom it pointed, and directed men.

The apostle speaks to this purpose, particularly in the argument before taken notice of in the epistle to the Colossians. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day:—which are a shadow of things to come: but the body, [the substance,] is of Christ."

Christ may be said, to have been fully come, and the things foretold concerning him, may be said to have been accomplished at his death, and his resurrection. As he said to the disciples: "These are the words which I spake unto you, whilst I was yet with you: that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me," Luke xxiv. 44.

Christ then being come, and all things foretold of him having been fulfilled in his ministry, and death, and subsequent resurrection: the law, and its rituals, which had been brought in, and appointed to be in force only till he came, ceased to have longer any obligation. "Wherefore then serveth the law?—It was added, because of transgression, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made?—but before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our school-master, [or child's guide,] to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii. 19, 23—26.

3. Which brings me to one thing more, by way of solution of this difficulty. Upon the death of Christ the obligation of the law ceased, because by his excellent doctrine, and miracu-

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lous works, his self-denying ministry and death, he has rendered all these ordinances of the law useless and unnecessary.

They had been of use formerly: by their number and variety, their shew and splendour, they were serviceable to engage and employ the Jewish people, and those who joined themselves to them, and to hinder them from revolting to idolatry, and taking up the customs of the people around them. But they are now no longer necessary. For by the perfect doctrine, the holy and exemplary life, and the painful and ignominious death of the Lord Jesus, such an argument has been exhibited for true holiness, heavenly-mindedness, the sincere and constant worship and service of God, that these ritual ordinances are no longer requisite or useful. There needs not now any great number of external, discriminating rites and ordinances, to keep the people of God distinct and separate from the rest of the world. For in the death and resurrection of Christ, are afforded such powerful inducements to virtue, as may effectually preserve men from idolatry and apostacy from God, without the guards and fences of ritual ordinances.

This then was one end of Christ's submitting to the fatigues and inconveniences of his laborious ministry, and to the pain and ignominy of the death of the cross: that he might deliver his people, and all who believe in him, from the numerous and burdensome appointments of the law of Moses.

He was "made a curse for us," he was exposed to the opprobrious death of the cross, and all the grievous circumstances of it, that we might be "redeemed from the curse of the law," and no longer fear any penalties for neglecting any of its unnecessary institutions: and that we might enjoy "the blessing of Abraham," that privilege which was promised to be conveyed to the world through him, and which himself once enjoyed in his own person, free from the appointments of the law, afterwards enjoined with assurance of the divine favour and acceptance, solely upon the ground of a reasonable and truly holy service and obedience.

III. Nothing now remains, but that I add a few remarks.

1. We may now distinctly perceive, for whom Christ was made a curse.

Christ says the text has redeemed us from "the curse of the law." Thereby some would understand particularly the Jews, who they say, alone were under the law. But I think it evident, that the apostle means Gentiles as well as Jews. For he here says, that "Christ has redeemed, [or delivered] us from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles." And our Lord himself, in the time of his own ministry, when the call of the Gentiles was not fully opened, expressly says, he died for all, and not for those of the Jewish nation only. "And I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring in," John x. 15, 16.

Indeed all were in some measure under the law till Christ came: obedience to it being the only way of obtaining a share among the professed people of God, or his visible church.

The Christians in Galatia were not Jews, but were converted from Gentilism. Yet the apostle writes to them in this manner: "But now, after that ye have known God,—how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye again desire to be in bondage?" Gal. iv. 9. They never had been Jews nor proselytes to Judaism. The sense of the apostle's words therefore is this: how can ye despise the freedom of the gospel, and approve of, and choose that state of things which prevailed before? When all were required to receive the law of Moses, as the external badge of relation to God, and his family.

And afterwards he says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with that yoke of bondage," Gal. v. 1. Which expressions shew, that the apostle supposed Gentiles as well as Jews to have been by Christ set at liberty from the law of Moses: or, as in the text, that he had "delivered us from the curse of the law."

For before that, according to the constitution of things introduced by the law of Moses, since the Abrahamic covenant, all were to be proselyted to the Jewish religion. There was no other way of admission to religious communion, or civil conversation with the people of God.

The character of Cornelius in the Acts, is, that "he was a devout [or good] man, who feared God with all his house," Acts x. 2. Nevertheless Peter, till farther enlightened, and better instructed in the Christian scheme, and particularly directed, scrupled to go to him. And when he came to his house, he said: "Ye know, how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come to one of another nation. But God, [through Christ,] has shewed me, that I should not call any man common or unclean," Acts x. 28.

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2. We here see reason to admire the love of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ; and what a tribute of gratitude, respect and obedience is due to him who was "made a curse for us:" who, according to the will of the Father, resigned himself to a most painful, and above all, a most ignominious death: who suffered as a malefactor with men of the worst characters. How reproachful this in the eye of the world! How grievous an affliction must this have been to the Lord Jesus, after all the honours of his miraculous ministry! Here is every thing grievous and reproachful that can touch an innocent and generous mind!

Yet our Lord went through it patiently, and meekly, with a view to the great and desirable ends proposed by it: and therefore his death is indeed most glorious; and it has been greatly rewarded. But it was a mixture of very bitter ingredients which he tasted of: and it was for our sake; and in particular, that we might be delivered from the burden of the law, and from all the penalties annexed to neglect and disobedience to it. And it is through him, that we, who once were afar off, have been brought nigh unto God: that we, who before were aliens, are made heirs and fellow-citizens, and of the houshold of God, without any of the burdensome institutions of the law of Moses, which must still have been in force, and we must have submitted to them, in order to our being of the people of God, and members of his church, if Christ had not by his death given such attestations as he has done to the truth of that doctrine of pure religion which he had taught. And if he had not also thereby inspired his immediate disciples and followers with an invincible love and zeal for truth and virtue, enabling them to withstand and surmount the greatest allurements, and the most frightful discouragements of the present life.

3. A serious attention to this text, and argument, may assist us to understand some other texts, where Christ is said to have died for us, for our sins.

It seems that the death of Christ was not, properly speaking, so necessary on God's part as on ours. God never valued nor delighted in the external ordinances of the law of Moses. What he looked for, and required, chiefly, was "truth in the inner parts." He desired "mercy rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God the Lord more than burnt-offerings," &c.

He was not at all unwilling that men should be released from the obligation of numerous ritual institutions. Find but out a way to bring men to good understanding in things of religion, and a love of real holiness: so that they shall no longer be in danger of casting off the divine fear, and going after idols that are not able either to hear or save those who serve them: and he would be willing that ordinances of positive appointment shall be laid aside.

This way he has himself graciously discovered and approved of; sending his Son, the Messiah, and appointing the humiliation, as well as other circumstances of his life and death, in which he acquiesced. Whereupon the many peculiarities of the law of Moses were abolished and laid aside with the consent and approbation of him who had appointed them.

In like manner God was not unwilling to pardon sinners, if they could but be brought to repentance. For this purpose the life and death of Christ are admirably suited, by affording more forcible considerations to awaken and reclaim sinners, and confirm the virtue of good men, than all the discoveries of reason, aided by former revelations. God needed not to be appeased. But sinners needed to be amended. When they are so, he readily accepts them. God is in himself gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth. He desires not the death of sinners, but their life and salvation. If sinful men will but be persuaded to forsake their evil ways, which are displeasing to a pure and holy God, the controversy between him and them will be made up. This is the doctrine of the Old and New Testament. Says God, by the prophet Isaiah: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isaiah lv. 7.

It is the same under the dispensation of the gospel. There also forgiveness is annexed to repentance. This is the important doctrine preached by Christ himself, and his forerunner John the baptist, and his apostles after him.

Of John the baptist, St. Luke says: "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," Luke iii. 3. The same is the character of our Lord's ministry, in all the Evangelists. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." So in Matthew, ch. iv. 17. To the like purpose in Mark, ch. i. 14, 15. And our Lord, when risen from the dead, tells his disciples, that now "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among

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all nations, beginning at Jerusalem," Luke xxiv. 47. And after our Lord's ascension, when the Jews at Jerusalem were much moved by the discourse Peter had made, and "said to him, and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them: Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," Acts ii. 37, 38. And afterwards, Peter, in the presence of the Jewish council, says: "Him hath God exalted—to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31.

St. Paul reminding the elders at Miletus of his past conduct among them, observes, "how he had kept back nothing that was profitable to them, but had shewed them, and taught them publicly, and from house to house: testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," Acts xx. 20, 21. And giving an account of his conduct, and the doctrine taught by him, since his conversion to the faith of Jesus Christ, he declares to king Agrippa, and the great company with him, how he had "shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance," ch. xxvi. 20.

Sincere repentance therefore is the condition, upon which sinful men may obtain the forgiveness of their past sins. Yea our Lord assures us, "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." He also says, that "there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance," Luke xv. 7—10.

It is certain therefore, that God in his great goodness, will pardon and accept of penitent sinners. But the great difficulty is to bring men to forsake their sins, and return to the practice of virtue. This, and our great want of consideration, our affection for earthly and sensible things, the little regard which men have for the things of religion, have rendered the most awakening arguments necessary. These are set before us in Christ Jesus. And Christ has died, in order to bring us to God, and to induce us to continue in the ways of righteousness. "Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray: but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls," 1 Peter ii. 24, 25.

4. And lastly. Our meditations on this text may assist us in discerning the divine wisdom in the time of the Christian revelation.

The apostle says, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son—made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," Gal. iv. 4, 5. The purpose was formed very early. And Christ is spoken of as "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. But the full manifestation of this design was deferred. The world was not sooner fit for the mild and gracious dispensation of the gospel. It is true, that Abraham, and the Patriarchs, were free from many incumbrances afterwards introduced. And for a while true religion, the worship of God, was upheld by the piety of the heads of that family. But when that family became a nation, it evidently appeared, that a number of discriminating rites was needful to keep them separate from their idolatrous neighbours, and to maintain true religion in that which was the only nation and people, that worshipped the only true God.

We ought not therefore to surmise, that the coming of the Messiah was too long deferred. If the expectations of men had not been raised beforehand, if there had not been great preparations made for his reception: the Christian revelation, and the death of Christ itself, might have been either in vain, or however, not to so good purpose, as it was.

Let us then acknowledge and celebrate the wisdom of the Divine Being in affording the world the advantage of so reasonable, so spiritual, and so gracious an institution. Let us be thankful, that the knowledge of it has been brought to us, and that the evidences of the divine original of this religion are still so clear and satisfactory.

And as we in these late ages of the world have the blessing of Abraham, which was so early designed, free from the incumbrances afterwards introduced, and imposed even upon his own posterity by nature; let us prize it, and steadily adhere to the essential articles, and indispensable laws of it, cheerfully "serving God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life," Luke i. 74, 75.

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SERMON III.

THE PROMISE ANNEXED TO GODLINESS.

For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

These words comprise in them three propositions.

I. Bodily exercise profiteth little.

II. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having, particularly, promise of the life that is to come.

III. Godliness has also promise of the life that now is.

I intend to consider each proposition, in the order just mentioned.

I. "Bodily exercise profiteth little." Which words are differently explained by expositors.

1. Some interpret these words in this manner: all that men do outwardly in religion, though commanded by God, if it be separated from the devotion of the heart, profiteth little. This cannot procure acceptance with God, nor make amends for defects and miscarriages, in point of true holiness.

But there seems to be little ground for this interpretation. It is not favoured by any part of the connection, except that godliness, which is opposed to bodily exercise, does indeed undoubtedly include in it the devotion of the heart, as well as outward acts and performances of religion.

2. Some suppose the apostle herein to refer to the exercises of the Greeks, in their olympic and other games, and any exercises of the body preparatory to those public contentions.

This interpretation has an appearance of probability. St. Paul had just before exhorted Timothy to exercise himself unto godliness. And the original word for exercise is a technical word, often used concerning the preparatory exercises of the Grecian racers and combatants, and the vigour and activity which they exerted in the public contention.

The apostle then adds: for bodily exercise, such as that of those who contend for victory in the celebrated games of Greece, or polite parts of the world as they are esteemed, though it be very difficult, painful and laborious, profiteth little. It may conduce to the increase of bodily strength and vigour, and secure the victory in those combats, and the crown, and other honours, and temporal advantages annexed to it in this world. But all this is a trifling matter in comparison of the advantages of godliness. And after this manner St. Paul writes to the Corinthians.

3. Hereby some understand a severe and excessive discipline, practised by some persons, which is mere will-worship, consisting of long and painful fastings, and abstinence from things in themselves lawful and innocent.

Bodily exercise, says a learned expositor, is here bodily discipline, lying in abstaining from certain meats, keeping set fasts, watchings, lying upon the ground, going barefoot, wearing sack-cloth, or hair-cloth, abstaining from wine, or marriage: all this is of little advantage: the mind of man is not bettered hereby.

This interpretation seems to be not a little favoured and supported by the coherence. Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, says the apostle at the beginning of the chapter, "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith,—speaking lies in hypocrisy,—forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.—If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ.—But refuse profane and idle fables; and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: whereas godliness is profitable unto all things."

This sense is received by many expositors of good note: bodily exercise, says one, intends useless mortifications and macerations of the body, and other superstitious practices then in use

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among the Jews and some other people. And, says another, by bodily exercise St. Paul means abstinences and austerities, which simple or hypocritical men had introduced. And he makes use of an expression, which properly signifies the combats or exercises of those who contended in the Grecian games: because those persons observed a certain diet, or regimen, to render themselves more fit for the combats. The apostle's observation in this place may be illustrated by what he says to the Colossians, ch. ii. 20—23. "Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world; why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? (touch not, taste not, handle not; which are all to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men:—which things have indeed a shew of will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." A passage likewise of a polite Jewish writer, contemporary with our Saviour and his apostles, though no Christian, may cast some light upon this interpretation. If, says he, you see a man designedly mortifying himself with hunger and thirst when the circumstances of things lay him not under any such necessity, omitting the usual refreshments of bathing and anointing, greatly negligent, or even sordid in his dress, often lying upon the bare ground instead of a bed, and pleasing himself with such sort of temperance; have pity upon him, and shew him wherein that virtue (of temperance) consists: for all those exercises are useless torments of body and mind.

The apostle's design then is this: bodily exercise, such as is practised in the public games of Greece, or in the preparatory exercises: and that which some others observe according to rules and institutions of human invention, is of little advantage.

That is the first proposition.

II. The second proposition contained in the text is, that godliness is profitable for all things, having, in particular, promise of the life that is to come.

This indeed stands last. But I have chosen to invert the order, and speak of this first, because the promise, or happiness of the life that now is; as to godliness, or godly persons; very much depends upon the promise of the life that is to come: for which reason I hope this method will not be disapproved.

By godliness I think we are here to understand every branch of religion and virtue, which is reasonable in itself, or expressly required and commanded of God. Indeed the word is sometimes used in a more restrained sense, for that part of our duty which more immediately respects God: as when it is said, that we are taught by the gospel to live "soberly, righteously and godly in this present world," Tit. ii. 12. But at other times the word has a more comprehensive meaning. So at the end of the preceding chapter of this epistle to Timothy, ch. iii. 16. "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." Again, in another chapter, 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4. "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing."

What the apostle intends by godliness here we may learn from a parallel exhortation in the second epistle to this same evangelist: "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart; but foolish and unlearned questions avoid," 2 Tim. ii. 22, 23. There he directs Timothy to follow the several branches of that godliness, to which here in the text he only in general exhorts him to exercise himself.

Undoubtedly godliness in the comprehensive, which is a just sense of the word, includes every thing holy and virtuous, the love of God and our neighbour, and all the duties included in these general precepts and principles of religion.

It includes the fear or reverence of God, trust in his care and providence, faith in his promises, and a readiness to bear and endure whatever he lays upon us.

It includes likewise the practice of truth, righteousness and goodness toward men. We should also be meek, patient and long-suffering. And we are to govern and regulate our affections, senses and appetites, according to the rules of reason, using all the comforts and innocent enjoyments of this life with sobriety and moderation.

If we will complete the character of godliness, we should walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless, without any wilful, designed, or allowed exceptions and omissions, or presumptuous transgressions whatever.

And we should maintain and profess the truths, which God has made known to us, whether by reason or by revelation, whoever denies or opposes them.

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This is godliness, which, as the apostle here says, "is profitable for all things, [and in particular] has a promise of the life which is to come."

They who live godly, who adhere to and observe the doctrine which is according to godliness, and practise the several parts of piety just described, shall obtain everlasting life; happiness and glory in a future state, when the life that now is has a period.

This is so certain and so manifest a truth, that to you it needs no proof or demonstration. Jesus himself assures us, he came, that his people "might have life; and that they might have it more abundantly," John x. 10. He has declared, that when he shall come again to judge the world, and shall finally separate men according to their different characters, "the righteous shall go away into life eternal," Matt. xxv. 48. He said to his disciples: "If I live, ye shall live also:" John xiv. 19; and bid them "not to fear," though a little "flock," since it "was their Father's good pleasure to give them a kingdom," Luke xii. 32. This is, as it were, his last will and testament: "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me," John xvii. 24. It would be tedious to recite only a small part of the passages of the gospels and epistles of the New Testament, where this is clearly taught. I shall only remind you of the beginning of the second epistle to Timothy, and of the epistle to Titus. The former is: "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Christ Jesus." The latter: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness: in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

Upon the foundation of this well-grounded hope, the apostles recommended it to men to forsake all sin, and practise all virtue. For, says St. Paul, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," Rom viii. 13. And in the last chapter of this epistle to Timothy, 1 Tim. vi. 17—19. "Charge them that are rich in this world,—that they do good, that they be rich in good works,—laying up in store—a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life," 1 Tim. vi. 17—19.

"This then is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation."

III. The third proposition in the text is, that "godliness has also the promise of the present life, or the life that now is."

This, possibly, may require some proof and evidence. The former proposition, some may be ready to say, is indeed unquestioned, and without controversy true and certain. There does "remain a rest to the people of God," Heb. iv. 10. When Christ shall come again to render to every one according to his work, there will be equal and exact retributions made to all. And the righteous shall receive a full recompense of all their services, labours and sufferings. But here it is not so. Here the religious and virtuous seem not to have any very desirable portion allotted to them. They are often neglected and scorned: and even hated and oppressed. They are truly and properly styled pilgrims and strangers on this earth. And this world is to them a very vale of tears. Did not Paul and Barnabas, as they went on confirming the churches which they had planted, acknowledge, "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God," Acts xiv. 22. Does not St. Paul likewise say, that "all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," 2 Tim. iii. 12. And Solomon under the ancient Mosaic dispensation, when promises of temporal good things for the righteous are thought to have been more express, declares from his observation of things: "that no man knows love or hatred by all that is before him," and that "all things come alike to all," Eccl. ix. 1, 2.

To which I would answer, that nevertheless it ought to be supposed, that there is a truth in the observation of the text, that "godliness is profitable for all things, and has promise of the life that now is." We have no good reason to charge the apostle with inconsistency. Nor has he forgot what he said upon other occasions, of the afflictions and persecutions endured by himself or others in the service of truth. No, these things were ever present to his mind. And he immediately adds after the words we are considering: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe."

Let me attempt an illustration of this point in the following observations.

1. It is certain, that God's providence is over all his works, and that he has an especial, and

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more favourable regard to righteous and sincerely good men than to others. As David says: "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright," Ps. xi. 7. which ought to be admitted as an undoubted maxim, never to be called in question: and is equivalent to what St. Paul says in the words cited just now, "God is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe."

2. It ought to be owned, that the great promise of the gospel is eternal life, or happiness in a future state, the life which is to come, as it is expressed in the text. "And this is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life," 1 John ii. 25. Again, "And this is the record, that God has given us eternal life: and this life is in his Son," ch. v. 11. And to the like purpose many other texts of the New Testament. See 2 Tim. i. 1. Tit. i. 1—3. Heb. viii. 6.

3. Nevertheless there are under the gospel dispensation promises and assurances of comfort, peace and happiness to good men in the present world. Says our Lord, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth," Matt. v. 5. Arguing against solicitude for the things of this present life, he says: "Therefore take no thought," that is, be not anxious, "saying, what shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you," Matt. vi. 31, 32. And, "every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life," Matt. xix. 29. Or, as in another gospel, "shall receive an hundred fold, now in this present time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions: and in the world to come, eternal life," Mark x. 30. And when he forewarned the disciples, that "in the world they should have tribulation," John xvi. 33, he sufficiently assured them, that through him they would have peace and comfort.

4. But yet neither the law nor the gospel makes promises and assurances of remarkable prosperity and greatness to all good men in this world. Not much wealth, or great honour and respect from men: but rather only a competence of good things, favour and esteem with good men, and those among whom they live. This seems to be what our Lord means, when he says, all these things, food and raiment, before spoken of, shall be added unto you.

Nor is it any thing more that is promised in the Old Testament. So particularly in the thirty-seventh Psalm, a remarkable portion of scripture, with regard to this point. "Trust in the Lord, and do good. So shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed," Ps. xxxvii. 3.—"For the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace," ver. 11.—"I have been young, and now am old: yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," ver. 25. And at the sixteenth verse of that psalm: "A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked." Which is entirely conformable to what our Lord observes: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance which he possesseth," Luke xii. 15. And considering the snares and temptations of this present world, some wise men have chosen a competence as the most desirable condition, preferable as to want, so also to abundance. Says Agur: "Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

5. Some inequality and diversity of circumstances, with a variety of afflictions, is not unsuitable to the present state and condition. In this world the nature and constitution of all men is frail and mortal; it is a state of trial not of recompense. All therefore must unavoidably be liable to some, yea to many inconveniences, troubles, pains, sorrows, and disappointments. And all without exception must in the end submit to the stroke of death.

Good men, as well as others, may meet with trials and afflictions. It is the necessary consequence and result of the present frame of things. It cannot be otherwise, without a continued series of miraculous interpositions, and overthrowing the present course of nature, and turning this world, which appears to be a state of trial, into a state of remuneration and reward. Good men being mortal as well as others, they are liable to various bodily weaknesses and indispositions, to pining and tedious sicknesses, and even to long-continued exquisite and tormenting pains. And they may be tried and exercised with other disasters and afflictions, the

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death of children or other relatives and friends; at other times, by the unkindness and sad miscarriages of those whose spiritual and eternal interests are most precious and desirable to them.

In such a world as this, wherein all are frail and mortal, where there are different characters, wise and foolish, good and bad; where there are different tempers and dispositions, where there is much peevishness and perverseness, as well as mildness and compliance; there will be a great deal of uneasiness and unhappiness, and a very considerable diversity of circumstances. Some bad men may attain to abundance of outward grandeur and worldly prosperity, and some good men may be depressed, abused, and ill-treated. At the same time considering, that neither the affliction of the one, nor the prosperity of the other can last always; and that neither condition is unmixed, and entirely throughout uniform and of a piece, the inequality is not vast. For in much outward prosperity, the most established and secure, there will be cares and fears, and there may be stinging reflections. And in afflictive cases there are usually some intervals of ease, some alleviations and abatements of pain and grief, some refreshing supports, cordials and consolations.

Which leads us to observe farther:

6. Piety has many advantages relating to this present life, and good men have grounds of support and comfort in every condition: whereby the "promise of the life that now is," is fulfilled and made good to them.

But the farther consideration of this point must be deferred to another season.

SERMON IV.

THE PROMISE ANNEXED TO GODLINESS.

For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.—1 Tim. iv. 8.

I HAVE already shewn what we are to understand by bodily exercise, and that godliness has promise of the life which is to come.

III. The third thing is, that "godliness has promise of the life that now is." And for illustrating this point several observations have been mentioned.

1. It is certain that the Divine Providence is over all his works, and that God has an especial and more favourable regard to righteous and truly good men than to others.

2. It ought to be owned, that the chief promise of the gospel is eternal life, or happiness in a future state.

3. Nevertheless there are under the gospel dispensation promises and assurances of comfort, peace and happiness to good men in this world.

4. But yet neither the law nor the gospel makes promises and assurances of remarkable worldly prosperity and greatness to all good men in this world.

5. Some inequality and diversity of circumstances, with a variety of afflictions and troubles, is not unsuitable to the present state and condition.

6. Piety has many advantages relating to this present life, and good men have grounds of support and comfort in every condition; whereby the promise of the life that now is, is fulfilled and made good to them.

This was just mentioned the last opportunity. And it is the main point, which is now to be made out by us.

And I presume, that all may by this time be sensible of the reasonableness of the method in which we have proceeded: first insisting upon the promise of the life which is to come: inasmuch as that promise, and the hope of future eternal life, cannot but be an immediate source of comfort and joy. And without that promise and hope, the practice of virtue, and the profession of truth, if possible, would in some cases be extremely difficult and uncomfortable. For what

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should induce men to hazard all their present interests for the sake of truth? With what satisfaction could an upright friend and patron of religion and virtue resign this present life, and submit to and undergo a painful death for the sake of truth, if there were no life to come where some recompense may be received?

In showing, then, the advantages and comforts of piety here, and its promise of the life that now is, the promise of the life which is to come must be supposed, and taken for granted, or well proved: as indeed it is a certain truth, or faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation.

In making out this point I intend to insist on the several following particulars.

We will compare the condition of good and bad men in this world. In the next place we will observe some temporal advantages which piety will be attended with, and may be the means of. It also secures from some temporal evils and troubles: and finally it affords comforts and enjoyments which are not to be had without it.

1. Let us compare the condition of good and bad men in this world. For possibly, if we do so, it may appear, that the irreligious, who mind nothing but the affairs of this world, have seldom even now, upon the whole, any great advantage or superiority above the truly good and virtuous.

It is true, there are some instances of bad men, or of such as concern themselves about nothing more than a form of godliness, who have a great deal of outward worldly prosperity: and there are some good men in very low and mean circumstances, who meet with a great deal of worldly trouble and affliction; but it is not always so: neither do all bad men prosper: nor are all good men in adversity. Success does not always attend unrighteous or hypocritical men in their unrighteous designs. If they are unsuccessful; if they are disappointed in their aims and pursuits, how distressed then is their condition! how great their grief and vexation! which a good man avoids, or very much moderates upon like occasions.

Supposing the covetous and ambitious to prosper, and obtain the advantages they aim at; still those advantages are exceeding uncertain and vain. They cannot afford a great deal of satisfaction. For they are accompanied with cares and fears, and may be all lost. If they are not lost, they must be soon left: how soon, man knows not. "Riches," as the wise man observes, "certainly make to themselves wings: they flee away as an eagle towards heaven," Prov. xxiii. 5. And, says the Psalmist, "Man that is in honour abideth not," Ps. xlix. 12.

There is no stability in earthly things, and but little satisfaction to be had from them whilst they are possessed. How unsettled, for the most part, is the condition of those who are in places of honour and preferment! How numerous and how watchful are their enemies and opposers! For which reason fears and jealousies oftentimes perplex and torment the minds of those who are in the most exalted stations. And though men are much advanced, the greater power, honour and splendour of some others may occasion envy, pining grief, and vexation. Whilst men have many and great advantages, and almost every ingredient of worldly felicity, some one trouble or affliction, or a restless desire of some one thing still wanting, may imbitter every enjoyment.

There is not then, any thing very tempting in the most splendid circumstances of bad men.

2. It should be considered, that there are many temporal worldly advantages, which do usually attend the practice of piety, and which it is the means of. Sobriety and temperance conduce to the health of the body, which is a very great blessing, and to the clearness of the understanding, the vigour of the mind, and all the intellectual faculties.

The health of the body, which is a very great blessing, the clearness of the understanding, the vigour of the mind, and all its intellectual faculties attend upon, and are fruits of piety. Sobriety, with frugality and diligence, will ordinarily go a great way toward obtaining and securing a competence of all things needful and convenient: and the meek shall inherit the earth. Mildness of disposition and temper, and moderate affections, conduce to health and long life. These also, together with a prudent and agreeable behaviour toward all those we converse with, if they advance not to honour, will procure the favour and good will of some, and good repute with the wise and discerning. "He that will love life," says St. Peter, "and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil," 1 Pet. iii. 10—12. It is the advice of Solomon: "Commit thy ways unto the Lord,

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and thy thoughts shall be established," Prov. xvi. 3. Again: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him," ver. 7. He also observes: "A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine," Eccl. viii. 1. Which is not more true of that part of wisdom, which consists in knowledge and understanding, and an ability to resolve difficult questions, than in that wisdom which consists in a virtuous conduct, and a mild, discreet, and obliging behaviour among men. Goodness and beneficence secure men respect in the time of their prosperity. And if their circumstances change, and they be brought into trouble, they will still be beloved and esteemed, and they will meet with some to protect and supply them, and interest themselves in their favour, as the exigence of their case requires.

3. Another thing to be said in the behalf of godliness is, that it tends to prevent, or secure from many evils. This is implied in the last-mentioned particular. Let me however show this more distinctly.

Many evils, some inward, others outward, are prevented by the several branches of piety. The sober and temperate avoid the bad effects and consequences of intemperance and licentiousness. He who governs his passions and affections lives free from many uneasinesses and disquietudes that torment and pierce others of ungoverned affections and passions. The truly pious man, that is not ambitious of honour and preferment, state and grandeur, who is not covetous, who enlarges not his desires after much wealth and large revenues, avoids solicitude and perplexity. The humble man that overlooks neglects and ungrateful returns, and some scornful and disdainful treatment, possesseth himself in peace, when others destitute of that virtue are rendered unhappy, or rather, make themselves unhappy, by the misconduct of other men.

The meek and patient, who can pass by, or bear with some injuries and offences, avoid strife and contention, and all the disagreeable consequences thereof, and the train of evils that attend them. Ungoverned excessive anger, deep and lasting resentment, beside the inward uneasiness they produce, oftentimes involve men in great and inextricable difficulties which might have been avoided. And whilst the man of ungoverned passion loses the favour and affection of friends, the mild and discreet subdues the hearts of enemies, and gains their good will and esteem.

4. Lastly, Good men have many comforts and enjoyments which others are destitute of. Solomon recommending wisdom, openly declares (not at all fearing to disappoint those who should hearken to his counsel, and make the experiment), "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her," Prov. iii. 17, 18. And in another place he says: "A good man shall be satisfied from himself," ch. xiv. 14.

A discreet and thoughtful person, who has considered the nature of religion, and the extent of its precepts and obligations: who has formed to himself just sentiments concerning God and the way of serving him: and who does actually perform the duties suited to his capacities and circumstances; revering, honouring, and worshipping God, infinite in perfection, and the fountain of all good; loving, relieving, helping his fellow-creatures according to his power, with fidelity and readiness; will ordinarily enjoy much peace and tranquillity of mind.

If at any time he have been misled from the paths of virtue, he has now repented of all his sins, and trusts in the forgiving grace and mercy of God, who pardons and accepts repenting and returning sinners: and he keeps himself in his favour by carefully avoiding all known sin, and performing sincerely every known duty.

He has now the pleasure of integrity, though not of perfection. And being in the frame of his mind and the conduct of his life, obedient and conformed to the will of God, he has a persuasion of his favour and acceptance, which is the truest joy and satisfaction.

Such an one is happy in every circumstance. Alteration of outward condition will not utterly destroy his peace and tranquillity, satisfaction, comfort, and joy. The sentiments and language of the Psalmist are those of all good men in general. "There may be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased," Ps. iv. 6, 7.

If he be in prosperity, he owns God to be the giver of every good and perfect gift, and with delight offers up to him sacrifices of praise and thanks.

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Is he brought into trouble and affliction? He has resources of peace and comfort, which others want. He still trusts in God, and casts his care upon him. He has a great deal of comfort in the consideration, and full persuasion, that the providence of God, who is righteous, and loveth righteousness, is over all: and he thereupon concludes, that all things shall be overruled for the good of those who adhere to the laws of reason and virtue.

As spiritual good is in itself, and in his esteem, the most valuable good, and durable happiness in a future state is the ultimate end of man; he is reconciled to present afflictions, by considering them as the chastisements of his heavenly Father, appointed and laid upon him, for making him more pure and perfect, and more meet for unmixed happiness; or even for securing his welfare and safety, and preventing his ruin, that he might not finally perish with the world of thoughtless and inconsiderate men.

Certainly, when under afflictions, he will have different thoughts and apprehensions concerning them from what others have. His affections were not before so set upon this world and the things of it, as those of some others are: though, possibly, he too has exceeded in his regard for them. However, his moderation of affection for them is now of great benefit. And these things never having been esteemed as his sole or main portion, he is not so totally dejected and disconcerted, as some others are in like circumstances. This is no small advantage in a world where all things are uncertain, and the circumstances of men frequently vary and alter.

And if he actually find afflictions to be of use to him, of service to his spiritual interests, he is mightily reconciled to them. His troubles may appear almost shocking and unsufferable to other men, and the meanness of his outward circumstances may lead them to despise him. Still he can be pleased, if he find himself humbled in the frame of his mind, more affected with the evil of sin, more fully determined for the service of God, and the performance of every duty lying before him. He is satisfied if these afflictions have proved the means of such good, and have better fitted and prepared him for that world where all sorrow and sighing shall flee away; which they never will here. In this manner therefore David speaks of the troubles he had met with: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes," Ps. cxix. 71. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me," ver. 75.

This is said with regard to the common afflictions and troubles of this life.

But farther, are good men brought into difficulties, on account of the profession of truth, and acting agreeably to convictions of their conscience, and deliberate judgment concerning things? Upon such an occasion they have special supports and consolations. They have now a strong persuasion that their faithfulness is well-pleasing and acceptable to God. And they have a humble hope, that if they can persevere to the end, they shall be saved, and receive an abundant reward.

The declarations of scripture upon this head are full of comfort and encouragement to all who are brought into this trial. "My brethren," says St. James, "count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations: knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," Jam. i. 2, 3. St. Paul encountered many difficulties in the service of true religion. And the acknowledgments he had made with regard to his own and other's experience, who laboured with him at that time, are very observable. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ," 2 Cor. i. 5. "And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing, that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," Rom. v. 3—5. In another place: "For which cause we faint not. But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: whilst we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen, are temporal: but the things which are not seen, are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 16—18.

Whereby we perceive the true and effectual blessing, which our Lord bequeathed his disciples: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," John xiv. 27. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have

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tribulation. But be of good cheer: I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33. And the Psalmist of old could say: "Great peace have they that love thy law; and nothing shall offend them."

As a good man of any rank, in any state and condition, proceeds and perseveres in the practice of piety and virtue, he has an encreasing joy. His perseverance in the way of God's commandment, and continued respect to the divine precepts, confirms the persuasion of his integrity, and he assures his heart before God. His peace and satisfaction are very likely to prevail more and more toward the period of his time here on earth. For he has pleasing reflections and comfortable prospects, to which others are strangers, and which others cannot have. So says the Psalmist: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace," Ps. xxxvii. 37. And this is an important point, to conclude well.

All which considerations, I presume, sufficiently prove the truth of the observation in the text; that "Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

Having now sufficiently considered the several propositions of the text, I shall conclude with some inferences by way of application.

1. We may hence learn to be cautious how we pass any severe censures upon men on account of the disadvantages of their present condition, or the outward troubles and afflictions which they meet with here. This inference follows justly from things before said. This is not a state of recompense, but trial: all things, all outward things, come very much alike to all. There is no knowing good and evil, love and hatred, certainly, by those things which befal men here. Nor are all men miserable who lie under external disadvantages. Some may be greatly afflicted, as we have seen, and yet be peaceful, joyful, and comfortable. Some may meet with many and long continued troubles and afflictions, who yet are not abandoned of God, but approved by him: who are sincere and upright, and persuaded of their acceptance with God. There are good reasons for such a dispensation. Valuable ends and purposes are answered thereby. Good men are improved and made better by the sufferings they endure. Others of more imperfect virtue are made more perfect, and learn from them the duty of patience and resignation. And many by observing the great examples of patience and fortitude of some good men under various trials, may be convinced and persuaded of the truth, power and excellence of the principles of religion.

2. Young persons and others, who are disposed to seek and serve the Lord, and to walk in the way of his commandments, may be hence convinced, that they have no reason to be disheartened and discouraged, as if they should find no pleasure, and obtain no advantages in the way of religion and virtue. I hope such will be pleased to consider seriously what has been said. For a principal design of these discourses has been to remove such a prejudice against religion, and show fully that it is false and groundless: and to persuade men to come to a speedy and immediate determination for virtue, which is really profitable for all things.

3. However, certainly, it is very fit and prudent, at first setting out in the way of virtue, and taking upon us the profession of true religion, to consider the outward disadvantages and sufferings, that may attend such a course, and do sometimes befal the sincere and conscientious. By this means we become prepared for all events. Our resolutions are more confirmed; our obedience will be the more uniform; and a good issue becomes more likely. We shall not only begin, but also finish well. The path of such will be as the morning light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

4. It seems to be a probable truth, that the highest attainments in virtue and holiness will have the largest share of comfort and happiness in this present life. The most complete in virtue will obtain many advantages, and escape many evils, and have the best supports and consolations: for these know best how, and are best able to trust in God. They are most resigned to his will. They have the most lively hope of an heavenly and everlasting inheritance. They, usually, have the most comfortable persuasion of the divine favour and acceptance. Their affections are the most mortified to earthly and sensible things. They have the fullest command of their appetites and passions. They have less anxiety and solicitude about earthly things. They are best contented with their condition. They are freest from envy, ill-will, jealousy, and other troublesome and tormenting emotions and diseases of the mind. This soundness and vigorous health of the soul cannot but have delightful effects. As then godliness is profitable for all

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things, the greatest attainments in piety will usually have the best portion of comfort in the life that now is, as well as the greatest reward in the life which is to come.

5. Let us not then, having begun well, be ever induced by any means to forsake the practice of piety. Let us not take offence at the troubles and afflictions which may for a while lie upon us, or upon some others, who are sincerely devoted to the service of God. For it is a certain truth, that godliness is profitable unto all things. If we persevere and advance therein, we shall be more and more convinced of this truth, "that light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." Let us not then be imposed upon by some specious appearances, or put in for a portion with every one, who makes a show of mirth and gaiety. Let not any thing transport us beyond the bounds of serious thought and consideration. If we weigh things carefully in an equal balance, piety will have the preference in our judgment above irreligion and wickedness. And knowing the inconstancy of our tempers, and the dangerous tendency of some worldly temptations, we shall be earnest with God to establish the good and wise purposes of our heart once seriously formed: to turn away our eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken us in his precepts.

The just sentiments of the apostle in this text and context deserve our notice. He speaks lightly of bodily exercise, as a small matter: whilst he highly prizes, and earnestly recommends sincere piety. And he censures such as should forbid to marry, and require men to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving. It is the same which our Saviour said and taught in the hearing of all the people: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man," Matt. xv. 11. The Christian religion, which is true religion only, insists not upon grievous austerities, and severe and unnecessary mortifications of the body. Christians, if they understand their religion, are free from all such yokes of bondage or slavery, which are below ingenuous minds. And it certainly is no small advantage to be freed from burdensome impositions, and needless restraints of this kind; and to be able without scandal to partake of all the innocent enjoyments of life: provided men do not set up some other sort of orthodoxy, as vain and insignificant; equally unprofitable to those who pride themselves in it, and equally troublesome to the world around them.

6. Finally, let us exercise ourselves unto godliness. Bodily exercise profiteth little. It has no divine gospel promise of any good thing whatever. But godliness is profitable unto all things: and has promises of life and happiness hereafter, and of peace, joy and comfort here. Let us exercise and improve ourselves in this true excellence, by meditation and prayer, watchfulness and circumspection; restraining irregular appetites, purifying ourselves more and more, and adding one virtue to another, being ready to every good word and every good work, and growing daily more perfect in sobriety, meekness, patience, and every other part of true real piety.

SERMON V.

INTERNAL MARKS OF CREDIBILITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Moreover, I will endeavour that you may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.—2 Peter i. 15, 16.

We are setting before you the grounds upon which we receive the Christian religion as true and divine. No religion can come from God which contains principles or rules of life unworthy of him; part of this design therefore is, to show the excellency of the principles of our religion, and the goodness of its precepts: that they are suitable to the divine perfections, and such as may proceed from him, without any derogation to him; if not such as could come from none

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but God himself. Another part of the design is, to consider the miracles supposed to be wrought by our Saviour, and his apostles, and the predictions of uncertain events, as attestations of a divine commission for giving these religious instructions to mankind.

But it is needful we have some satisfactory proof of the truth and reality of these. They who were eye-witnesses of any wonderful works, are satisfied by their own senses: but for us, who live many ages after the promulgation, and supposed attestation of this religion, it is necessary we consider what evidence there is of the account we have of them. There being no miracles wrought before us for the confirmation of our religion, we ought to be convinced of the truth of those that were done in the first ages of it. If it be made appear that many extraordinary works were done as proofs of a commission from heaven, that predictions were made of distant and uncertain events, which were afterwards accomplished, this will prove the divine original of the Christian religion. What lies before me therefore is to show, that the account we have of these things in the history of the gospel, and particularly in the books of the New Testament is credible, and such as may be received by impartial and unprejudiced persons: that Jesus Christ dwelt in Judea, and, in the name of God, taught the most pure and excellent principles of religion, worked many miracles, healing all kinds of distempers by his word, raising the dead, and the like: that he foretold many uncertain events, which afterwards came to pass;—his own death, resurrection, the pouring out of the Holy Ghost on his followers, with power to do the like, or greater works than he had done himself; the conversion of the world to his doctrine, and the destruction of the Jewish state: that he was crucified, rose from the dead, and ascended up to heaven: that his apostles and others, after this, did work many miracles by powers they received from him, and propagated in a great part of the world the doctrine he taught.

The particular consideration of the miracles and predictions of our Saviour and his apostles is in other hands. What lies before us at present is, the credibility of the account we have of them, and of the rise of our religion. That it is not a forged and invented story, but a faithful narrative of matters of fact; for we have not followed cunningly devised fables, as the apostle here says, but have delivered to you only an account of what we saw done before our eyes: and he says it when he was in expectation of leaving this world in a very short time: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me," 2 Pet. i. 14. St. Luke likewise avers in the beginning of his gospel, that he had perfect understanding from the first, of the things concerning which he was about to write: and St. John says, in the beginning of his first epistle, "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you," chap. i. 2, 3.

I propose to set before you the internal marks and characters there are of truth and probability in the account itself, the history of the New Testament.

1. I would just observe, that the books we receive this history from have the names of particular persons; and this is an argument they are genuine, when there is no particular reason to the contrary. The positive proofs which there are of their being really written by the persons whose names they bear, belong to another argument. All that I insist upon now is, that they were handed down to us in the names of the persons who take upon them this character of living at the time the things they relate were transacted.

As for the four gospels, the names of their several authors are not indeed inserted in them. Two of them, Matthew and John, were of the twelve disciples, and followers of Christ: Mark was a companion of Peter in his travels and preaching: and Luke was a companion of Paul. Some have supposed they were both of them of the seventy-two that were sent forth by our Saviour in his lifetime. In the epistles the name of the writer is inserted in the salutation of the person to whom they are sent, excepting that one of the epistle to the Hebrews, which, if written by Paul, as is generally supposed, might be omitted for special reasons.

2. These books are written in a language and in a style suitable to the character of the persons whose names they bear. The language is Greek, which obtained very much in that country, in Syria and Judea, and in Egypt, after the conquest of Alexander, and the division of the countries he had subdued amongst his generals. The language is Greek, but some words are used in a different sense from what they have in the ancient writers that dwelt in Greece and its colonies, and there are some few Syriac words, and some borrowed from the Roman language, and there are phrases that have somewhat of the Syriac or Chaldee idiom.

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3. Here are many characters of time inserted, which are arguments that it is a real history of facts. There was, saith St. Luke, "in the days of Herod the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia," Luke i. 5. The time of our Saviour's birth is set down with particular characters by the same evangelist. "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed;" not only the city of Rome, but all the provinces of the empire: "and this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria," Luke ii. 1, 2. or, as the words ought to be rendered, according to the judgment of the best critics; 'this taxing was before that, made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria,' to distinguish it from that which was really made ten years after, and which proved very fatal to the Jewish nation, by the sedition raised upon the occasion of it by Judas Gaulonites, and which gave rise to the troubles that lasted a long time. St. Matthew says likewise, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king," Matt. ii. 1. The first preaching of John the baptist has likewise very particular characters of time specified. "Now in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests; the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness," Luke iii. 1, 2. "At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus," Matt. xiv. 1. And in the Acts of the apostles we have an account of the opposition raised by the Jews against Paul at Jerusalem; of his being taken out of their hands by Claudius Lysias the chief captain; of his being sent by him to Felix at Cesarea; and, of his being delivered up by him to Portius Festus his successor. All these are such marks of time, as give some appearance of a true history of facts.—But to proceed:

4. The great design of this history, and of the first preaching of the gospel, has nothing in it that should tempt men to forgery and invention. The design evidently pursued is, the rectifying the conceptions of men relating to the nature of God, and the way of worshipping him; to convince them of their sins, and to turn them from them. Men are informed of their duty, exhorted to repentance. The Jews are admonished not to depend upon external privileges, but to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Gentiles are exhorted to turn from idols, and all abominable vices. The strictest regimen of thoughts and affections, of words and actions, is enjoined upon the sole consideration of a regard to God and a future account. Had it been an attempt to erect a civil government, or an ecclesiastical polity, there might have been some ground of suspicion of the miracles urged in its favour; though a bare suspicion must have given way to plain proofs. And, indeed, the gospel has this advantage of the Mosaic dispensation. His commission was manifestly proved by the wonderful things he wrought. But he formed a numerous people into political government, and settled an honourable priesthood in his family upon his brother, and his descendants. But the gospel design, as represented in the New Testament, will not suggest any suspicions to them that observe it. This is all I urge at present, that the great design promoted in this history, does not seem to carry in it any temptation to forgery and invention.

5. We have in this history, in the books of the New Testament, a very natural representation of things, with all the appearances of likelihood and probability. The chief subject of the four gospels are our Saviour's discourses and miracles, his history and resurrection, the reception he met with, the reflections the people made upon him, the exceptions of the people and pharisees against him, all which are suitable to the character of the persons, and the principles that obtained among them. When they had heard some of his discourses, the people soon apprehended a difference between his doctrine, and that they had been wont to hear from their Rabbies. "When Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes," Matt. vii. 28, 29. After he is said to have cured divers infirmities, restored sight to the blind, and speech to the dumb, and delivered some that were possessed with evil spirits. After he had wrought some cures, it is highly reasonable to suppose he should have a concourse of people flock to him, to reap benefit from his hands. "And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of

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Israel," Matt. xv. 30, 31. "The multitude marvelled, saying, it was never so seen in Israel: but the pharisees said, he casteth out the devils through the prince of the devils," Matt. ix. 33, 34. Some were offended at the meanness of his parentage and education. "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? whence then hath this man all these things? and they were offended at him," Matt. xiii. 54—57. "The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven: and they said, is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven," John vi. 41, 42. Again: "And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: (viz. at Jerusasalem) for some said he is a good man; others said, nay, but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit, no man spake openly of him (i. e. in favour of him) for fear of the Jews. Now about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught: and the Jews marvelled, saying, how knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" John vii. 12—15. "And many of the people believed on him, and said, when Christ cometh will he do more miracles than this man hath done?" ver. 31. "Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, of a truth, this is the prophet: others said, this is the Christ: but some said, shall Christ come out of Galilee?" ver. 40, 41.

The ninth chapter of St. John's gospel is an account of the miracle wrought upon a blind man whom he restored to sight; the scruples of divers of the people; the inquisitiveness of the pharisees about it; the shyness of the parents of the blind man to answer all their questions; the reflections of the pharisees, the reply of the blind man are altogether so natural, that the story can be nothing else but a bare representation of a real matter of fact: the chapter cannot be abridged, but may be read at your leisure, with the view for which I refer to it with great satisfaction. "There was a division, [or argument,] among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, he hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, these are not the words of one that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" John x. 19—21. And, at some times, great numbers of people were so moved by the sight of his miracles, and the new and surprising nature of his discourses, that they entertained a very strong persuasion he must be the deliverer they expected, and therefore invited him to take the authority and state of a king, and undertake to deliver them from the Roman government, particularly after he had fed five thousand with five loaves and a few small fishes, "When they had seen the miracle which Jesus had done, said, this is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." So that perceiving "they would come and take him by force, to make him a king," he was obliged to depart "into a mountain alone," John vi. 14, 15. to frustrate this their design, so contrary to all his intentions. At another time, great numbers are said to have conducted him in triumph into Jerusalem: "And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way, others cut down branches from the trees and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest," Matt. xxi. 8, 9. Nevertheless, as the multitude are variable in their affections, and as the Jewish people were in great subjection to the pharisees, and their rulers the inveterate enemies of our Saviour, and being, it is likely, tired out with his delays to take upon him temporal authority, and make some change in the government, as they expected he should, they at last cried out, 'Crucify him! crucify him!' Matt. xxvii. 20. desired the life of Barabbas, and that Jesus should be destroyed. But though the common people were divided in their opinion concerning him, and varied at times in their affection for him, the pharisees are represented as steadily opposing him with the greatest malice from the first to the last. He had with great freedom corrected their misrepresentations of the law; censured their additions to it, which were such as to subvert and make void the main branches of it; rebuked them for their pride and ambition, and hypocrisy. It is very likely therefore they should be implacable to him, as they are represented, and seek all opportunities to defame and destroy him. When some of their officers, whom they had sent out to apprehend him, returned without executing their orders, and expressed some approbation of his discourses, they answered, saying, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people, who know not the law, are cursed," John vii. 47, 48. And they were continually making those exceptions against him, which might have a tendency

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to make him odious to the people. "Then came to Jesus, scribes and Pharisees, which were at Jerusalem, saying, why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread," Matt. xv. 1, 2. They reflected upon him for his free conversation, in that he eat with publicans and sinners. Matt. ix. 11. They objected against him, that his disciples did not fast, and practise other austerities in much esteem at that time. "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast: but thy disciples fast not?" Mark ii. 18. It was a very great objection against him, with which they endeavoured to scandalise him, that he wrought cures upon infirm people even on the sabbath day, and because his disciples, as they went through the corn fields, plucked some ears of corn on the sabbath day. Mark ii. 23. They charged him with blasphemy, and assuming to himself the prerogatives of God himself, in that healing an infirm person, he says unto him, "thy sins are forgiven thee," ver. 5. At another time they affixed this odious charge upon him for styling God his father, thereby making himself as they inferred, equal with God. John v. 18.

The representation of the apprehensions of the disciples concerning our Saviour are extremely natural: from the words they had heard him speak; from the manner in which he taught; from the many wonderful works they had seen him perform; thence they entertained a strong persuasion he must be the Messias: and when he inquired what thoughts they had of him, they readily replied that he was Jesus the Son of the living God. But when he spoke to them of his sufferings, that the Son of man should be delivered into the hands of men, and they should kill him, and after that he was killed, he should rise again the third day; they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him. Mark ix. 31, 32. And in divers other places. They were possessed with the common prejudices of their countrymen, and were in continual expectation of seeing him in the highest splendour and power. This was the thing that was twice the foundation of the hopes they had of authority and power themselves as his favourites, since they were his intimate acquaintance and constant companions. This was the reason of their abandoning him at the last, under his disgrace and sufferings; and by this we may account for Peter's denial of his master, when he saw him submit to trouble he had no expectation of. This was likewise the reason of the great difficulty there was of convincing them it was really he, when he came among them after his resurrection. I might refer to the moving scene that passed between our Saviour and his disciples the night before his being apprehended. The sorrow they all manifested upon the declaration he made of the near approach of his death; the consolations he suggested to them; the prayer he put up for them; the professions they made of affection for him; the warnings he gave them; the promises they made of fidelity to him, and that they would rather die with him than deny him: are all such as none can read, I should think, but must be persuaded it is no other than a faithful narrative of a real transaction. The declaration likewise that Peter made, though all should be offended he would not, Mark xiv. 29. was agreeable to the forwardness and zeal he had shewn upon divers other occasions. And are not the scoffs of the people, and the triumphs of the Pharisees, said to be delivered by them against our Saviour when hanging upon the cross, just such as might be expected upon the occasion from the cruel insolence of one and the malicious satisfaction of the other? "And they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, he saved others, himself he cannot save: if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God: let him deliver him now if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God," Matt. xxvii. 39—42. And though I pass over many particulars, I must not omit to refer you to his compassionate lamentation of the miseries of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, when the prediction of their destruction by him is related, which could proceed from no other but one who was really the person the evangelists have represented our Saviour to be. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not," Matt. xxiii. 37. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes," Luke xix. 41, 42.

If we proceed to the history of the acts of the apostles, we shall find still the same just and

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natural representation of things. The charge said to be made against Stephen by the leading men of the Jewish nation, was the most popular that could be imagined, and most likely to reconcile the people to his destruction, which they aimed at. "And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses against him, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this place and the law," Acts vi. 12, 13.

The reception Barnabas and Paul met with at Lystra is as agreeable to the sentiments of superstitious heathens, surprised at first into such a high veneration for them, upon account of a miracle they had seen them work, that they were ready to pay them such honours as they gave their deities, and were as soon enraged against them when they disdained their idolatrous honours and denied their gods. "When the people saw what Paul had done (He had cured a man impotent in his feet, who had been a cripple from his mother's womb) they lift up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men," Acts xiv. 11. But "when there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, they stoned Paul, and drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead," ver. 19. And the uproar at Ephesus, upon the progress Paul had made, in drawing off some persons from the received superstition, was no other than might be expected in a city where the livelihood of a vast number of persons depended upon the sale of images and shrines of the goddess Diana, Acts xix. This just and natural representation of things is an argument of the truth and credibility of any history; when the reflections, objections, and whole behaviour of persons of the better and meaner sort are all conformable to their several characters, the opinions and sentiments that obtain among them, and the circumstances they are supposed to be in.

6. The impartiality of the history of the New Testament is another argument of its truth, and makes the whole appear credible. This is a rare and uncommon character, and I think is not more conspicuous in any history than in this. I would give you some few instances of it under these three heads.

1. Many things are here mentioned, that were in appearance, and in the eye of the world, disadvantageous to our Saviour.

2. The writers have not omitted those things that were really disadvantageous to themselves, and their companions, some of them in the eye of the world, and others really so; their own faults and miscarriages.

3. There are many disorders and miscarriages mentioned among the first converts to Christianity.

As to the first head, things that were to outward appearance, and in the eye of the world, disadvantageous to our Saviour, are, the low circumstances of his parents; the mean accommodations of his birth; that when he appeared publicly to the world, his townsmen and near relations despised and rejected him; that among his followers, there were few who were considerable for their knowledge of the law, for wealth or dignity; that the rulers, the scribes, and Pharisees, disowned his pretensions, and opposed him continually; that some, who for a time followed him, afterwards went off from him, and deserted him; that he was betrayed into the hands of the high priest and rulers, by one of those who had been chosen out for his constant companions, and had had an intimacy with him; that he was crucified in the most ignominious manner with two malefactors. Had it been a story invented, these particulars had never been part of it. Had it been a contrivance, they would never have thought of recommending to the generality of the Jews, a person, whom their rulers, and that sect which had the highest veneration among them, condemned and rejected; nor to the Gentiles, a person disowned and crucified by his own nation. Had the whole been a fiction, a crucifixion had certainly never been a part of the story. Had not they heard of the translation of Enoch? Was not the assumption of Elijah, who was carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, 2 Kings ii. 11, a model they might easily have followed and improved? Would not this have been much more glorious than a crucifixion, though afterwards succeeded by an ascension? Was it possible this fact should have been overlooked by any one person; much less by a college, or number of persons, who had attempted an agreeable story to be recommended to mankind? Certainly their view could be no other than the relating of real matter of fact.

Another proof of their impartiality is, what they have mentioned really, or to appearance,

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disadvantageous in their own character and conduct, and that of the other chief followers of Christ. They have inserted in this account the mean original and occupation of several of themselves; that they were but fishermen; and the infamous employment of Matthew, who was a publican. Many of their own faults and failings are mentioned in such a manner, that one would not imagine they had concealed any of the aggravating circumstances of them: nor do they seem to have softened the harshness of the reprimands their master gave them: and many of them are such as they might have kept a secret among themselves. Some of them were originally known only to Christ and the twelve, and divers of them, but two or three of the number could be privy to. This account represents the twelve infected with ambitious views of honour in a temporal kingdom; they had a contention which of them should be the greatest: it was a dispute they had one with another as they were travelling without other company. The importunate ambition of the two sons of Zebedee, and their mother, for the first and second post in the Messiah's kingdom. Their fears and diffidence when they were in a storm, though Christ was with them. How severe a rebuke have they given us an account of, which they received from Christ, when they had understood him to speak concerning temporal provisions, and he had been admonishing them concerning the leaven of the Pharisees? "Why reason ye, because ye have brought no bread? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your heart hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember?" Mark viii. 17, 18. And what a contemptible figure did they make, whom Christ had left behind him when he went up into the mountain with Peter, James, and John? for when he came down again, he found a great multitude about them, the scribes and Pharisees questioning with them, and a man hasting to him, bringing his son to him with a dumb spirit, telling him, "I spake to thy disciples, that they should cast him out, but they could not;" Mark ix. 15—18, upon which they received that just reprimand of their unbelief even before the multitude; "Then Jesus answered, saying, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me," Matt. xvii. 17. And what could be more shameful than their forsaking Christ, and leaving him when he was apprehended by the officers of the high priest? except only the denial of Peter, repeated again and again, with circumstances unbecoming a man of honour, a worshipper of the true God, and much more a companion and disciple of Christ. Indeed, if the honour of any of them were to be consulted, it was Peter's: yet we find he is not spared at all, any more than the rest. He was one of them whom Christ called to be with him at the first: had made the most express declaration of his character; had been the first instrument of opening the gospel after our Saviour's resurrection, both to Jews and Gentiles; and yet we have as many shameful miscarriages mentioned concerning him, as concerning any of the rest. When "Jesus began to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed and be raised again the third day;" Matt. xvi. 21, then Peter took upon him to rebuke his Master, as if what he had said proceeded from melancholy fears that arose in his mind, and not from a certain knowledge of what was to befal him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee:" ver. 22. upon which he received the severest reprimand recorded, as given to any of the twelve: "But Jesus turned and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things which be of God, but those that be of men," ver. 23. He was doubtless engaged with the rest in the contention for precedency: he was guilty of diffidence when Christ called to him to come to him upon the water: he was drowsy and overcome with sleep when he was with Christ in the garden, when he was in an agony that might have filled those present with him with the highest concern, and tenderest compassion for him: he disowned Christ in a most hardy and peremptory manner, when his master was in his view, under an unrighteous persecution, immediately after the warmest and most confident professions of zeal and affection: and we have notice taken of a dissimulation he was afterwards guilty of, in favour of the Christians that were of the uncircumcision, to the prejudice of the simplicity of the gospel, Gal. ii. 11, 12. I might observe the contention between Paul and Barnabas, which is recorded in the Acts: so that though for a long time they had been companions in preaching the gospel, they separated, and went asunder for the future.—But enough has been said.

Lastly. The impartiality of the history appears in the accounts that are given of the first converts to Christianity after our Saviour's ascension. If we should read the history of any

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particular reign, filled with high encomiums of the posture of affairs, and find it represented as a time wherein the arts of peace and war flourish; in which all arts and sciences are promoted and encouraged by a wise and prudent administration: the government just and mild; the people tractable and obedient; no impediment in the counsels, nor miscarriages in the execution; the negotiations abroad, as well as counsels at home, managed with the utmost sagacity; armies ever victorious; no interruption of commerce, nor disasters in war: no wonder if posterity judge such a performance a panegyric, a romance, or any thing rather than a history: or, if the accounts given of the state of Christianity in its infancy had resembled the pictures which have been since drawn by some modern representations of the manners of the first converts: that they were universally eminent prodigies of virtue and piety, scarce any tokens of human frailty, with now and then a rapturous exclamation on the unanimity and harmony of sentiments and affections that prevailed among them: one might very well have suspected matters of fact must have been falsified and misrepresented, that it was a story very much improved, if not altogether invented. But this is not the case. In this, as well as in every other part of this history, there appears a perfect impartiality. It is indeed related to the honour of the converts to Christianity at Jerusalem, that "the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common: neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need," Acts iv. 32—35. And we may easily believe there were such an harmony among them at first, when the same author has acquainted us, that in a short time afterwards, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, "there arose a murmuring of the Grecians," or Hellenists, "against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration," Acts vi. 1. Nor can we have any reason to discredit the fore-mentioned account of the generosity of them who were possessed of houses and lands, that they put the price of them into a common stock for the relief of those that wanted. I say, we have no reason to doubt that this generosity was general, when the same author has been so particular, as to record the dissimulation of two of the number, of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 1. who endeavoured to put a cheat upon the apostles, and kept back a part of the price of their lands when they pretended to make a contribution of the whole value. The preposterous fondness of the Hebrew converts for the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law is likewise recorded; and the disturbance they gave the gentile converts on that account.

In the epistles of the apostles that have been handed down to us, are preserved memorials of many particulars not very honourable to the first converts to Christianity. The readiness of the churches of Galatia to depart from the purity and simplicity of the gospel. The scandalous disorders of the church of Corinth in some solemn parts of their worship; the contentions among them in behalf of their teachers; their preposterous use of the gift of tongues proceeding from vanity and ostentation; the unaccountable conceits of others, who depended upon an empty faith without works, and a speculative knowledge without a suitable practice, referred to in the epistles of St. James and St. John. Upon the whole, it seems most evident from the facts related in this history of what seems disadvantageous to Christ himself, what was so to the writers themselves, and the first Christians, that those persons from whom we have received these accounts, had a very particular regard to truth, and preferred its interest before all selfish considerations.

7. The remarkable plainness and simplicity of the narration is another argument, and internal character of the credibility of the history. Matters of fact, all related without any remarks of the writers. There is, as one observes,[a] 'No preparation of events; there are no artful transitions or connections; no set character of persons to be introduced; no reflections on past actions, nor the authors of them; no excuses or apologies for such things as a writer might probably foresee would shock and disturb his readers; no coloured artifices or arguments to set off a doubtful action, and reconcile it to some other, or the character of the person that did it.' Thus far this author. How simple and plain, how free from all pomp and ostentation is the

[a] Gastrel's Certainty of the Christian Revelation, p. 52.

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beginning of every gospel. The writer enters immediately upon the matters of fact he has to relate, without any laboured introduction, without any attempt to raise the expectation, or engage the affections of the reader. If it had been an artificial story, invented and composed with design, we should have many other particulars in it than now there are. They have not sought out occasions to enhance their Master's honour. The former part of his life is almost entirely past over, and, besides his miraculous birth, the obeisance paid him by the wise men, and some extraordinary circumstances at the temple at the purification of the virgin, scarce any notice of him from that time to his public appearance at about the age of thirty, excepting that one fact of his arguing with the doctors in the temple. Luke ii. 46. Had it been a story forged and contrived, his infancy and youth had not been thus slightly passed over; we should have had many accounts of wonderful preservations, and a miraculous providence attending him all along; there would have been related divers omens and presages of the figure he was afterwards to make in the world; numerous specimens of a pregnant capacity and zeal: whereas the historians have almost immediately entered upon his public appearance, which was what mankind was chiefly concerned in. When they have mentioned the meanness of their Lord's circumstances, or of their own original employment, they have added no apology for it, nor concerned themselves to account for their Master's choice of such followers; many failings of their number related, but no vindication, apology, or mitigation added; nor have they filled their accounts with tedious complaints of the injustice, malice, or unreasonableness of their own, or their Master's enemies; they have not bestowed any set encomiums upon Christ himself. The character indeed that results from the facts they have mentioned, is the most perfect that can be conceived: but yet, here are no hints at the masterly strokes of his character; no enlarging on the justness, propriety, aptness, beauty of his parables; no enhancing of his miracles from the number, greatness of them, or the manner of their performance: but only a plain simple narrative of his discourses and behaviour, with the reflections that were made upon him by others, which are likewise delivered with a remarkable plainness and simplicity.

I may have dwelt too long upon these two or three particulars; but I own a discovery of naked simple truth in history is enchanting. It gives one uncommon delight to observe it in any history, though of no extraordinary importance; one is so often disgusted with that favour on the one side, spite and malice on the other, which do so continually occur in the works of the most celebrated historians of all ages and nations, of all sects and religions. To find it therefore in the most early accounts of our religion, is a peculiar satisfaction; and though these accounts may be destitute of some ornaments, not altogether inconsistent with truth and faithfulness, yet they have what illustrates and recommends them much more than exactness of method, purity of stile, the harmony of periods, and the most elaborate and finished oratory of set speech could ever have done.

There is but this one point of practice I would take this opportunity to recommend to you; and that is, the frequent and diligent reading of the scriptures, especially of the New Testament; and that you would not read them now and then a chapter; but some large portions at a time, when you have leisure, and find yourselves disposed for serious consideration, and best fitted for making reflections. You might thus for yourselves make such remarks, whereby you might be charmed with the natural representation of things, the plain simplicity of the narration, and be more fully convinced of the credibility of the whole narration, and consequently be more persuaded of the truth and divine original of that religion you profess, which is the foundation of comfort under the troubles and afflictions you are exercised withal in this world, and of the hope you have of happiness for yourselves and your friends in the next.

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SERMON VI.

INTERNAL MARKS OF CREDIBILITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty. 2 Peter, i. 16.

We are laying before you the arguments for the truth of our religion; a design that needs no apology, and that may justly be undertaken without any particular provocation. It would be necessary and useful though there were none that contested the truth of it, or that offered any objections against it: for every man ought to have grounds for the religious principles he entertains.

Without therefore any harsh reflections upon others, I shall calmly prosecute my argument, and proceed to set before you some farther evidences of the credibility of the gospel history, namely, that Jesus Christ dwelt in Judea at the time mentioned in the gospels, taught in the name of God, wrought many miracles, and foretold many events which afterwards came to pass, in confirmation of his mission from heaven, suffered on the cross, rose again, and ascended into heaven, and that the apostles and others, by powers derived from him, confirmed his doctrine by many wonderful works, and propagated it in many parts of the world.

If the account we have received of these things be credible, we have the highest reason to believe our religion is true, and of divine original.

I proposed in a former discourse, you may remember, to consider the marks and characters there are of truth, in the account we have of these things in the books of the New Testament.

I have already made considerable progress in these internal testimonies, these marks and characters of truth, observable in the writings of the New Testament which render the account we have received highly probable, and such as may be admitted by reasonable and inquisitive persons. Some of them were the just and natural representation which is here given of all matters related and treated of, the impartiality of the history, the plainness and simplicity of the narration. I shall not now stay to rehearse any other particulars than those now mentioned. I may by and by go them all over again, when I sum up the argument. For the present I proceed to what remains.

8. Here are many facts and circumstances set down, so that if the relation were not true, they might have been easily confuted. This is a good argument of the truth and credibility of any history, and is very observable in this. For men writing a forged and invented story, to have taken this method, had been to expose themselves to an easy and certain confutation, and all the reproaches of falsehood and imposture, and would have been declined and avoided by all persons of an ordinary sagacity.

The scenes of the most material actions are not the deserts of Arabia, or some other obscure and unfrequented places; the time fixed is not some distant age, nor is the account given obscure and general.

The facts are related as lately done, some of them as transacted at Jerusalem, then under subjection to the Roman government, and garrisoned by a band of Roman soldiers, others at Cesarea, others in cities of great resort in Syria, and other parts: so far is the account from being general and obscure, that here are notes of time, circumstances of place, names of persons, occasion of action, and many other particulars that might facilitate inquiries, and render a detection no difficult matter, if the relation had not been true. Thus, "these things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing," John i. 28.

The chief seat of our Saviour's preaching and miracles was Galilee, and the towns and villages bordering upon the sea of that name, called likewise the sea of Tiberias: his frequent crossing of that sea from one side to the other; what things happened on one side, what on the

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other, are for the most part set down very distinctly: and for this reason, among others, probably, was this place chosen; that by passing over to the other side of that water, he could avoid that concourse of people his miracles might otherwise have occasioned, and which was necessary for preventing all umbrage of tumult or disturbance in the government: and this was a country at no great distance from Jerusalem: from whence the high priest and pharisees might easily send officers to see what was done, or was related to have been done there, and might inquire into the truth of matters. This country was likewise very near to Cesarea, at this time the seat of the Roman proconsul, and inhabited by great numbers of Jews, as well as Greeks and Syrians: "And they came over unto the other side of the sea into the country of the Gadarenes; and when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean spirit," Mark v. 1, 2. Him, our Saviour delivered; after which upon our Saviour's permission, the evil spirits that came out of the man, entered into swine feeding there, which ran violently into the sea: "and when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side," ver. 21. he cured the daughter of one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name.

There are accounts of miracles wrought, in which vast numbers were concerned, which must render inquiries easy. Five thousand men, besides women and children, were fed with five loaves and two fishes. This was done in a desart place, belonging to the city of Bethsaida. Luke ix. 10, 11.

Our Saviour is said to have been crucified at Jerusalem, at the time of the passover.

The gift of tongues is said to have been bestowed likewise at Jerusalem, at Pentecost; and at these two feasts, it is well known, there used to be at that time a resort of vast numbers of people, Jews and proselytes, to Jerusalem; not only from all parts of Judea, but also from many other countries.

The first instance of the invitation of a heathen into the religion of Christ, was Cornelius, a Roman, an officer of Cesarea, a considerable person in a noted city. The mention of such facts as these, in this manner, if not true, must have laid them open to an easy confutation, and all the reproaches of imposture.

But there are other particulars related, which had a tendency to raise resentment in persons of figure and power, and, if false, must some of them have exposed them to punishment, without any grounds for pity or justification from any. The account given of the persecution of our Saviour, by the high priests and pharisees, is of this nature; and his condemnation by Pilate, governor of Judea: of this kind is the account given of the beheading of John the baptist, and the occasion of it. Matt. xiv. Nor would it have been safe to have told such a story as is done, of St. Paul's being seized in the temple by a great number of Jews, and carried thence to be stoned by them; Acts xxi. of his being taken out of their hands by Lysias the chief captain; of the Jews that devoted themselves afterwards, under a curse, to kill Paul; of Lysias sending him afterwards under a guard to Felix, the governor of Cesarea, Acts xxii. or Paul's preaching before Felix and Drusilla; and that Felix trembled when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, and that he hoped to have had money given him of Paul, that he might lose him; and that Felix delivered over Paul to Portius Festus, his successor, willing to do the Jews a favour, Acts xxiv. 25, 26. nor would they have related an appearance of Paul before king Agrippa and Bernice, who came to Cesarea to salute Festus, Acts xxv. 13. nor the apology he made for himself before them. Such facts as these would never have been mentioned in this manner, if not true. This then is another argument of the credibility of this history.

9. Another internal testimony of the truth of this history is, the marks of honesty and integrity of the persons engaged in the first publishing the gospel, and who were the witnesses of thn main facts here related, which appear in the writings of the New Testament. These we may learn by nicely observing their conduct in the prosecution of this design.

There is indeed another way of making out the honesty of these persons; for the proving of that, and that the gospel was no invention, or cunningly devised fable, as the apostle's expression is in the text, but what they were fully persuaded of in their own minds, we might argue in this manner.

Was it likely, that a few persons of an obscure birth in Judea, supported by no considerable alliances, should entertain a thought of subverting the religious worship and customs of their

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own country, and of the rest of the world, unless they were fully persuaded they had special illuminations and extraordinary assistance from God, and should be supported by him with a power of working such miracles as this history relates they performed? Were they ignorant of the bigotry and stiffness of their own countrymen, or of the circumstances of other people in the world, whose religions were supported by antiquity, great unanimity, by the power of the nations in which they obtained, by the influence and arms of the Roman empire, then spread over almost all the known parts of the world; all which religions were very inviting and engaging, by the vast indulgence they gave to the corrupt inclinations of men? Could they imagine they should be able by mere artifice, or bare force of argument, to propagate a religion entirely new, that would lay a disgrace on the rites and ceremonies instituted by Moses, as mean and insignificant, that paid no honour to their temple, or their sacrifices, or their solemn feasts, and denied altogether the traditions of the elders, for which the Jews had so high a veneration: in a word, that retained scarce any part or principle of that religion, besides the one article of the one God, that made the heavens and the earth, and that would assert the gods of all other countries and people were devils, or senseless idols, and represent their religious principles and practices as absolutely absurd and abominable?

Was it likely that any persons should, for the sake of a forgery, run the hazard of all those sufferings and inconveniences they could not but expect in the prosecution of such a design? What could they expect but disgrace and contempt at least, to be deemed madmen at best, that would propagate notions contrary to all the rest of mankind, perhaps to be treated as seditious and turbulent, men that had bad designs, contrary to the common belief of the civil constitutions of the world? No advantage possible to be obtained without great fatigue and many dangers: they must encounter the passions as well as the sentiments of mankind. Would any men undergo this for the sake of a mere invention? What is there so taking in being the head of a party? especially, could it be likely that men of a low education, as most of these persons were, should be seized with this sort of ambition, and enter on a design encumbered with so many difficulties? Would they not rather choose peace and quietness at home, and a competence in the callings they were bred up in? As for Paul in particular, what temptation of gain or honour could he have in this undertaking? Was he not bred up in the most honourable and flourishing sect in his own nation, under a master of considerable reputation, and must he not here have the fairest view of all that could flatter his pride and ambition, if these were the principles that governed him?

But in answer to all this, it may be said, this does not seem very likely. However, it is not impossible, and can never be proved, that no men may form projects, which have not at first appearance any prospect of success; some men are fond of their own schemes, and have an high opinion of their own abilities, imagine they can surmount very great difficulties, and by address and artifice, break through a great deal of opposition. Some have engaged in great and hazardous designs, and have succeeded beyond what the most could have imagined; and the few instances there have been of this kind, may give encouragement to others of a bold and presumptuous imagination.

As to the mean occupations of most of the twelve, some such persons have had high spirits, and have been carried by their ambition into vast designs: as for the pains they must take, the fatigues they must undergo, many persons will forego outward ease, and sensual pleasure, and be at a great deal of pains to carry a point they have once proposed to themselves. As for the sufferings and inconveniences they run the hazard of, all men do not judge alike of these things: the timorous and the daring are very differently affected by them. Some imagine difficulties in every thing; others reckon every thing they have a mind to, easy to accomplish. Some men's spirits are sharpened by the appearance of difficulties, and they are even fond of such undertakings. As to Paul's prospects of honour and advancement in his own nation and his own sect, it might be so as has been represented; but perhaps he had met with some check, and his pretensions were not gratified, and in a disgust he might resolve revenge, and enter into a design that should ruin the sect that had shown him unkindness. So that a great deal may be said on both sides, in this general speculation, on the passions, interests, views, and inclinations of men.

I cannot say we need decline this way of arguing as if we had no advantage in it; for certainly, considering the state of the world at that time, the circumstances of Jews and Gentiles,

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the apostles must have had a very unaccountable turn of mind, and have been very different from the rest of their species, if by their own skill and contrivance they imagined they could bring any great number of persons over to their opinions, which were singular, and opposite to all others; and if they had not entertained hopes of making a considerable number of proselytes, they could not act upon secular views and considerations. However, at present I do not insist upon this; and the course of my argument leads me to the other method of surveying and examining their conduct, to see what marks they give of design, what of honesty and integrity. This seems to be more decisive than the other way. We have, in the writings of the New Testament, sufficient materials to go upon in this inquiry.

That they did not set out in this undertaking with secular views, and were not actuated by them in the prosecution of it, appears in all the parts of their conduct; they did not aim at pleasure and ease, at wealth or honour.

That they did not seek ease and bodily pleasure, appears from the fatigues they underwent, the journeys they took; and that imprisonment, stripes, and scourging, did not discourage them in prosecuting their design. But this is so evident that it need not be insisted on.

And if men propose the aggrandizing themselves by heaping up wealth, or by raising to themselves authority and power, they will often forego and neglect bodily pleasure: but neither did they seek wealth, for they made no profit of the religious instructions they gave men, nor of the powers they claimed and put in practice, of healing distempers, and removing other bodily inconveniences men laboured under. They freely employed this power on the poor and necessitous, such as were able to make no requitals for it; though they were far from being possessed of any superfluous riches. Peter and John, of mere benevolence healed the lame man that was daily laid at the gate of the temple to ask alms of them who entered into it: and Peter said unto him, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk," Acts iii. 6. Men that are rich will give any part of their substance to recover their health, and preserve life, when under painful and dangerous illnesses; and any advantages might be made of this power, supposing it possible to be lodged in men of a sordid spirit, or a worldly mind; especially if we consider that the apostles are represented, not only as possessed of the power of healing themselves, but likewise of a capacity of bestowing gifts of the Holy Ghost on others. Selfish and covetous persons would have purchased such a gift at any rate: but the apostles detested such a thing as making profits of this part of their power. They met with temptations of this kind, but rejected them with the utmost abhorrence and indignation. When the gospel had been received by some at Samaria, and the apostles had conferred some gifts on some of the converts; "When Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost; but Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought the gift of God may be purchased with money; thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter," Acts viii. 18—21.

In divers places where Paul spent a considerable time in sowing the seed of religious principles, in convincing and teaching, he refused all gratuities, though he did, it is true, accept of some supply from others. "When I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man; for that which was lacking to me, the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied; and in all things, I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you:" 2 Cor. xi. 9; but all this appears, from the expression made use of, to have been only a supply for the present, and what could not last long. And it is plain from what St. Luke relates, that during part of his stay at Corinth, he worked with his own hands for the gaining what was necessary for the support of life: "After these things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth, and found a certain Jew, named Aquila, with his wife Priscilla; and because he was of the same craft he abode with them, and wrought, (for by their occupation they were tent-makers"), Acts xviii. 1—3. At Thessalonica likewise this was the case: for he tells the Thessalonians: "You remember, brethren, our labour, and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God," 1 Epistle ii. 9. Nor did he suffer others to make any considerable advantages. "Did I make a gain of you, by any of those whom I sent unto you? I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother: did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same steps?" 2 Cor. xii. 17, 18.

Yea the apostle professed himself a loser on the account of this religion, which whether true

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or not, might have been known. "Yea doubtless, and I account all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ," Phil. iii. 8.

It is evident they did not seek honour to themselves, the common charge against innovators, the great propensity, as it is supposed, of all who affect to be heads of a party. From those that continued their old affection for judaism or heathenism, they could expect nothing but contempt or aversion—to be thought inconsiderate, mistaken and deluded wretches, or else proud and self-opinionated, perhaps designing and wicked. As for them that came over to them entirely, or conceived favour for their doctrine, it is plain they sought not honour from them; for they refused all undue respects when offered them. We have an instance of this at Lystra. Paul and Barnabas cured a man lame from his birth. When the people saw this, "they lift up their voices saying, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." The priest of Jupiter had prepared oxen and garlands, and would have done sacrifice with the people. It was even dangerous to oppose such an attempt of gratitude and respect. Yet the apostles with the greatest eagerness put by these offers, though they could not do it but in a way that must lay a disgrace upon the rites this people were devoted to; "they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, Sirs, why do ye these things? We preach unto you that ye turn from these vanities, unto the living God. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them," Acts xiv.

They wrought no miracles in their own name: when they bestowed any extraordinary kindness upon any person, they did it in the name of Jesus Christ. And when any were ready to run into a mistake, and ascribe to them what did not belong to them, they were careful to rectify such apprehensions. When the people at Jerusalem flocked together about Peter and John, upon the cure of the lame man at the gate of the temple, "greatly wondering; when Peter saw it," he said to them, "why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly upon us; as though, by our own power or holiness, we had made this man to walk? The God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus:" the use they make of it is, to magnify the goodness of God, and the power of Christ, and to bring them to true repentance, that they may all share in the favour of God: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord," Acts iii. 19. When Peter was entering in to Cornelius, and he met him, and fell down at his feet and worshipped him: "Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man," Acts x. 25, 26. They disclaimed likewise all undue respects among those that had acknowledged their commission, and received their doctrine. They detested all contentions about their own persons, owned their meanness, and referred all to the glory of God. "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" 1 Cor. i. 12, 13. They owned their own meanness; that God had "chosen the foolish things of this world, and weak things, and base things of the world;" that he that glorieth might "glory in the Lord," chap. i. 27, 31. Again, "I was with you in weakness and in fear, and my speech was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit, and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," chap. ii. 1. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase," chap. iii. 5—7. "These things have I in a figure transferred to myself, and to Apollos for your sakes; that you might learn in us, not to think of men above that which is written," chap. iv. 6. "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy," 2 Cor. i. 24; "for we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," chap. iv. 5.

I might refer you to the appeals they have made themselves upon some occasions in behalf of their integrity: some of which at least are such as would not have been made, had they not been fully persuaded of their own sincerity, and that the persons to whom they made them, could give no proofs to the contrary, nay, must have such evidences of it before them as were undeniable. "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward," 2 Cor. i. 12. "But even after that we had

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suffered before, and were shamefully entreated at Philippi; we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of Christ," 1 Thess. ii. 2. "Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness. Neither of men sought we glory, nor of you, nor yet of others," ver. 5. "Ye are witnesses and God also, how holily and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe," ver. 10. A greater regard may be had to these appeals, because there were in most of the churches different parties, some Judaising Christians and their teachers; and if there could have been any exceptions against them, it would have been in vain to make them.

But there are some other appeals of the apostle Paul, which we may certainly lay a great stress upon, considering the occasion of them, the persons to whom, and the places in which they were made, and which must absolutely vindicate him in particular from all suspicion of baseness, and from selfish and worldly views in this design of spreading the gospel. In Acts xx. 18, 19, is his parting speech to the elders at Ephesus: "Ye know from the time that I came into Asia," i. e. that part of Asia which was then properly called by that name; "after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many fears and temptations.—I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel: yea, you yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and unto them that were with me," ver 33, 34. In Acts xxi. xxii. is an account of the seizing of Paul, by a multitude of Jews in the temple at Jerusalem; of his being taken out of their hands by the chief captain, who came with a band of soldiers, and bound him with chains: and when Paul was going up into the castle, followed by a great crowd, and had obtained leave to speak to the people, he spoke to them in the Hebrew tongue; "Men, brethren, and fathers,—I am verily a man which am a Jew of Tarsus: yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day; and I persecuted this way unto the death;—as also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders, from whom also I received letters, and went unto Damascus, to bring them which were there, bound unto Jerusalem to be punished." Then he proceeds to relate the extraordinary appearance he saw in the way, which was the means of his conversion. Now is it conceivable, that under such circumstances, when he was in the hands of the chief captain, the people of Jerusalem incensed and clamorous against him, he should give this account of himself, of the name of the person by whom he was educated in that city, and who was also living at that very time: appeal to the high priest himself, and the body of the elders, and tell them what was the real cause of his conversion; if in all this there had been any falsehood, and if there had been any ill conduct in the former part of his life, for which he had been thrown off by his party, or if he had met with disappointment in any pretensions which might be matter of lasting disgust, had it not been easy to convict him? and would not a falsehood delivered by him at this time, have been much to his disadvantage? But nothing of this appears, there was no falsehood in it; they heard him patiently, till in the course of his speech, he comes to mention a design of God, to send him from hence to the Gentiles. "They gave him audience to these words:" but the bare mention of any favour of God to the Gentiles, threw them into a rage that excluded all thought and consideration; then they cried out; "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live." This was the account he gave of himself upon many occasions; we find it in his speech to Agrippa: "My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among my own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, which knew me from the beginning (if they would testify) that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a pharisee." See Acts xxiii. 1; Phil. iii. 4, 5; and Gal. i. 13, 14. These are appeals which would not have been made, if they could have been refuted.

It is a strong proof of their integrity, and that they had no selfish designs in spreading a new set of religious principles, that they did not endeavour to accommodate the principles they delivered as from God, to the corrupt taste of Jews or Gentiles. It was not a religion made up partly of the one and partly of the other, modelled and contrived, and adjusted so as to please all parties. The Jews were implacably incensed, yet they made no composition with them in favour of their temples, their sacrifices, or their priesthood. When the Jewish converts had a zeal for some part of the Mosaic law, and they were somewhat indulged as to themselves, yet they could never lay unnecessary burdens upon the Gentiles, or oblige them to submit to any of the distinguishing rites of that institution. This was the determination of the apostles and elders in a full

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assembly at Jerusalem. Paul every where declares against the necessity of circumcision: and Peter had given his judgment clearly on the same side, though in a particular instance he was guilty in his practice of an improper compliance. As for the Gentiles, there was no favour shewn to any of their gods, or their rites: no indulgence to apply to them as objects of worship, or as mediators and intercessors: but they declared, notwithstanding the vast number of gods which were the objects of general devotion, that there was but one God, and one mediator between God and man: no indulgence to any vicious disorders, no relaxations of the strictness of their rules of life, in behalf of the most general customs, or the strongest inclinations: the preaching of the cross proved a scandal (though unjustly, and without reason) to many, was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; yet still they taught Christ crucified, as the wisdom of God, and the power of God. They preached repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, to Jews and Gentiles; exhorted the one not to depend upon their privileges, and the others to turn from their vanities to the living and true God.

The freedom they used towards those who were converted to Christianity, is another argument of their sincerity. They connived at no disorders among them; nor did they use flattering words, but charged them to "walk worthy of the Lord, who had called them into his kingdom and glory," 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21. Blaming even their backwardness and slow progress in Christian knowledge and virtues. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ: I have fed you with milk, and not with meat—for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions; are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat," 1 Cor. iii. Would any man have talked at this rate, spoken in this manner, who was ambitious to be at the head of a numerous party, when the persons they treat thus, must be under very strong temptations from this world, and perhaps some likewise from their own inclinations, to return to the more splendid, and yet more general religions of Judaism, or Gentilism, which they had lately forsaken?

Lastly. As to this point, it is a proof they were not influenced by worldly views in this design, since they persisted in it notwithstanding the very fierce opposition they met with from the Jews, and the scorn and contempt that was shewn them by the generality of Heathens: and when in the churches they planted, and among those who had given the most favourable reception to them, there were many who received their principles but in part, and did not submit to all their rules of life in their full force; when some, who had accompanied them in this work, forsook them, loving this present world, others gave way to seducers, and denied them that little authority they claimed, which they desired them to shew no other mark of, than by adhering to the principles they had confirmed among them by undeniable evidence; certainly they were animated by other, by higher considerations than worldly motives and inducements; for of these they met with none; and they must have been quite discouraged and (for ever) have abandoned their design, if they had not looked more "at the things which are not seen, which are eternal, than at the things which are seen, which are temporal."

These are as strong proofs of men's integrity as we can desire, as convincing as can be given.

10. We may reckon it an argument of the credibility of this account, that the writers of it, and the persons engaged in the first publishing the gospel, and who were the witnesses of the main facts upon which the whole depends, do appear to be free from enthusiasm; that is, they did not believe because they believed, nor act by impulse and inclination; but they were influenced in their belief and conduct, by reason and evidence, not by a strong imagination: their own faith was founded upon evidence and reason. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; this declare we unto you," 1 John i. 1. And what they professed to others, they proved by reason and argument. That they were not of an enthusiastic spirit, appears in the accounts given in the public preaching of our Saviour. He referred the Jews to the scriptures they read daily, and whose authority they owned: he appealed to his works. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not," John x. 37. I might refer you, as a proof of this character, to such exhortations as these. "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," 1 Thess. v. 21. "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God," 1 John iv. 1. "Judge ye what I say," 1 Cor. x. 15. Their offering all things to a fair trial and examination.

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The full conviction of the apostles themselves, of the divine character of our Saviour, seems to be owing to his resurrection from the dead, and the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon themselves. And stronger evidences could not be given of a commission from heaven.

The speeches we have preserved in the Acts and in the epistles they wrote, are full of reasons and arguments: some points are supported by a variety of proofs: you will find a strain of excellent reasoning in the speeches of Peter, the first publisher of the gospel, after our Lord's ascension; when, upon the apostles' making use of a vast variety of languages, in the hearing of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and of the strangers that were come thither from all parts, at the feast of Pentecost, some wondered, "others said, These men are full of new wine: but Peter standing up, said," among other things, "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day," Acts ii. 13—15; or nine in the morning, the time of prayer, to which they generally came fasting. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know," ver. 22. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses: therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear," ver. 32, 33. Are these arguments that can be gainsayed? He reminds them of the miracles Christ had wrought among them; declares they were witnesses of his resurrection, having seen and conversed with him since his crucifixion and burial; and as a proof of his exaltation by God, appeals to them as witnesses to what they saw and heard, as to the change wrought in themselves, and the discourses they had heard from them in tongues they had not studied or learned.

See Acts iii. from ver. 2 to the end. iv. 19—29, 31. Peter's speech to Cornelius is of the same kind. "That word, you know, which was published throughout all Judea:—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him; and we are witnesses of all things which he did in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses,—even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead; and he commanded us to preach unto the people," Acts x. 37—42. He refers them to *facts*, wrought openly, and lately done in all parts of Judea: and as to our Saviour's resurrection, the apostles, and others, who had seen him, conversed with him, and to whose examination of him he had offered himself, they were certainly competent judges, and sufficient witnesses of such a fact.

And I think no one will deny the speech of Peter, in Acts xi. to be full of strong and cogent arguments: when he was come back to Jerusalem from Cornelius, they who were of the circumcision, contended with him, saying, "Thou wentest into men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them:" upon which he related the whole affair to them, gave them an account of the reasons he had for going to Cornelius, and to baptize him, and at last shews that he had not acted without good grounds in what he had done. "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, as on us at the beginning.—Forasmuch then as God gave unto them the like gifts that he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.". A most just conclusion certainly from such premises. In Acts xv. is the same argument or reasoning in the assembly at Jerusalem.

The speech of Paul at Athens is likewise a piece of masterly reasoning, wherein he proves the perfections of the Divine Being from things visible in the frame of the world; from the powers we ourselves are endowed with, and the benefits men daily receive from him; and proceeds at length to the revelation made to the world by Christ; and exhorts them to repentance, from the consideration of that righteous judgment which should pass upon men by Christ, of which God had given assurance, in that he had raised him from the dead.

And he that considers the other speeches of Paul, may observe they are free from all enthusiasm, suited to the character of the persons he spoke to, and the principles they admitted, before "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come," Acts xxiv. 25. Festus indeed told him, upon his finishing his apology made before king Agrippa: "Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad," Acts xxvi. 24. But he that considers the speech itself, and the reply he made to Festus, must be sensible what Festus had said arose from prejudice, or great unacquaintedness with some of the matters Paul had treated of. He therefore

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justly replied to him, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness;" and appeals to king Agrippa, who might be supposed better acquainted with these matters than Festus: "For the king knows of these things before whom I speak; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him: for this thing was not done in a corner."

There are indeed some relations of trances and visions, which may be thought to contradict this representation of the apostles' characters. I will consider a few of them, which I do not select from the rest, as most capable of solution; for as far as I can judge, they are as exceptionable as any that can be instanced in. May not the account given of Peter's trance and vision give just suspicion of his being liable to the impressions of a strong imagination, and to be influenced by them in his conduct; that Peter went up to pray, fell into a trance, saw heaven opened, and "a certain vessel descending to him, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat; but Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I have not eaten any thing common or unclean. And the the voice said unto him, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." A full reply, I think, may be given to this. Perhaps it is hardly worth observing, that this was not in the night time, when the darkness of the season, the disposition of men's bodies, and some common prejudices, render men more susceptible of conceits and impressions, or more liable to be deluded by cunning impostors; for it happened at the sixth hour of the day, i. e. at noon. He could not well be mistaken, for the vision and the voice was repeated thrice: and when he was doubting what this vision should mean, persons inquired for him, acquainted him they came from Cornelius, who had been admonished by an angel to send for him: when he came thither, he found him in a disposition to receive farther information in matters of religion, and gifts and blessings were bestowed in a visible manner upon them that attended to him. Such a series of events corresponding to his vision, might well assure him of the reality of his vision, and the meaning of it; and may fully vindicate the person that related this account from all credulity. It is an additional confirmation of the truth and reality of this whole account, that the intent of the vision, and the use made of it, was by no means suitable to any preconceived notions we can suppose to have been in Peter's mind; and therefore nothing but full evidence could incline him to admit the truth of a vision and voice, that sent him to persons uncircumcised.

The history of St. Paul's conversion is another passage that may seem to savour of enthusiasm. But if we carefully examine all the parts and circumstances of it, I believe we shall find it void of all tokens, either of forgery or delusion; that it could not be a forgery or invention, is evident from the circumstances set forth. It is said to have happened when in company of those that attended him from the high priest and elders at Jerusalem, to put in execution orders for seizing persons at Damascus, that had embraced Christianity; it was in the day-time, and it happened upon the road in an open place. That all this was matter of fact, appears in that he boldly told this story as the ground of his conversion, without any apprehensions of confutation: and that the persons who were with him were so surprised at the light, as to fall to the ground, and to be speechless for a time: that blindness ensued, and continued upon him for three days; this must be known to them that laid their hands on him at Damascus. And that he was careful not to declare any thing more than the truth, appears in that he says, They who were with him, saw no man: he does not appeal to them for the truth of any thing more than was before them. The extraordinary light and a voice, they were witness of: but the appearance of Christ to him, and the words he spoke to him, and his blindness afterwards, rely upon his own testimony; and, that he was not then himself deluded and deceived, appears in that this happened at mid-day; the light was so great, as to be above the brightness of the sun. His blindness continued three days; his cure was wrought by Ananias putting his hand upon him, and declaring that Jesus, who had appeared to him in the way, had sent him to restore his sight; whereupon there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he saw. Such an account as this, of an apparition that happened to Paul, not when alone, but in company, and that not in the company of those who were friends, and of the same way with him, may well be related by St. Luke without credulity.

There is one passage, which, perhaps, is the hardest of all to be accounted for: what Paul has said of his being taken up into paradise, or the third heaven; where he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. However, I think he will be acquitted here, if

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we consider the occasion of mentioning them: namely, the subtle methods of designing persons to draw off the Corinthians, whom he had taken a great deal of pains with, from the simplicity of the gospel; their attempt to lessen him unreasonably, on account of some disadvantages in his person, and his manner of speaking; and possibly, because he had not personally conversed with Christ, as Peter and the other apostles. For this reason he relates this extraordinary favour he had had from God, which he might certainly do if a truth, if he apprehended it might be of use to retain the Corinthians in the profession of the purity of the gospel, though he does not make it the sole ground of their belief of it, for he refers them in the twelfth verse of this chapter, as well as in other places, to the miracles he had wrought. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you, in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds." Our apology for this passage, and the apostle, would not be complete if we omitted the manner in which he relates it. He appears to be in pain, and can hardly persuade himself to mention it, as directly relating to himself. "I knew a man in Christ, above fourteen years ago." It was not mentioned till a long while after it had happened. He tells us the danger he was in honestly of some pride and vanity: and we have reason to credit what he has here declared, in that he uses so much caution not to say any thing positively, but what he was certain of; being in doubt whether this was with his spirit, or his whole man: "whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth." Words twice used on this account.

And in behalf of these passages we may offer this general observation; that when men came with a set of religious principles, that were beyond all others for their real excellency, their reasonableness, their purity, their tendency to regulate and improve the minds and lives of men, and produced before men's eyes openly works of an extraordinary nature; if they should, upon some particular occasion, relate an account of a vision, or some uncommon appearance, and what was said unto them therein, they would deserve credit if they were persons of an unblameable behaviour, if the principles they taught were pure and holy, and their reasoning upon all occasions just and good, and they wrought miracles in attestation of their mission; this may secure their credit, and vindicate them from the charge of enthusiasm in such particulars, as we have now been considering, and that they are not under the power of an ungoverned imagination. But all this will be no vindication, or recommendation of others, who pretend to visions and appearances in behalf of trifles, and who give no sensible proofs of a correspondence between heaven and earth, and who, in their ordinary behaviour, show much greater strength of fancy and imagination, than of reason and judgment.

These two last particulars may be joined together. We suppose those matters of fact to be well attested, which we receive from persons of honest hearts and sound understandings.

11. That the apostles wrought miracles, and conferred extraordinary gifts upon many others, is apparent from their epistles, written and directed to those who had seen these works, and shared in these benefits. These epistles of Paul, and the other epistles in the New Testament, have all the tokens of genuine letters: all except one or two have the names of the persons that wrote them. Here is the name of the person or church, and place to which they were sent; salutations of particular persons sent to others by name. Here are references to the particular occasion of writing them. The second epistle to the Corinthians has respect to the success and acceptance of a former letter sent to them: in some, questions are answered, that are supposed to have been sent to the writer for solution: so that there can be no doubt of their having been really sent to the churches and persons they are directed to. I insist only on the marks and characters in these epistles themselves, that may assure us they are genuine; for I am upon internal testimonies only. Now, in these epistles, the writers take notice of the miracles that they or others had wrought among them, to whom these very letters were sent. "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds," 2 Cor. xii. 12. "He therefore that ministereth to you the spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. iii. 5. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost," 1 Thess. i. 5. "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will," Heb. ii. 4. The writer does not labour in the proof of these things, he supposes them well known; he suspects no doubt but they were convinced these works had been done among them: the thing he is solicitous about is, that they would act suitably; and in consequence of such proofs, that they would be stedfast in the pro-

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fession of principles recommended by such testimonials: that they would not be moved by the artifices of persons who could not produce such works. And if we consider this, that there were some divisions in the churches; that there were some persons who were undermining the interest of the apostles among them, and endeavouring to overturn the work the apostles had begun; we can never imagine they would have expressed themselves thus, but that they knew the persons they wrote to had a conviction of the truth of what was written. Epistles are not treatises or histories, sent abroad to acquaint men of what they had not heard before: nor do these epistles tell them of wonders wrought in other churches; but they contain references to works wrought among them to whom they were sent.

Yet here is somewhat more in these epistles. Here are reproofs of the mismanagement of gifts they were themselves possessed of: directions given about the better use and employment of them. Can this argument of their truth be any way evaded? "I thank my God always on your behalf, that in every thing you are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge," 1 Cor. i. 4, 5. "Therefore, as you abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, in knowledge," 2 Cor. viii. 7. "This only would I know, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Gal. iii. 2. In the xii. xiii. xiv. chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians, are reckoned up divers sorts of gifts eminent among them; not all indeed bestowed upon one person; but some upon one, some upon another; though it should seem the apostles, and perhaps some others, had all, or most of them. He argues, that as these were all derived from one and the same spirit, into one body, they were not to foment any divisions on the account of these things; and he that had a more splendid gift, was not to despise another who had not one so conspicuous and remarkable; even as in the body, there are members more honourable, others less honourable; but all useful and necessary; they are exhorted seriously not to value themselves too much upon these gifts; but though it was a privilege to enjoy them, and they were valuable and desirable, yet they should rather aim to excel in love and charity, and other internal dispositions: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal: to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues," 1 Cor. xii. 7—11. "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues: are all apostles? are all prophets? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? —Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way," ver. 28—31. "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away," ch. xiii. 8. "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth, than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret that the church may receive edifying," ch. xiv. 5. "Let all things be done to edifying," ver. 26. "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at most by three, and that by course, and let one interpret," ver. 27. Almost the whole xiv. chapter relates to this one point. If there were no such gifts among them, would they have been cautioned not to overvalue them? If one had not one gift which another wanted, could there have been advices not to despise another who had not so remarkable and splendid a gift? If there had not been some disorderly use of prophecy, and the gift of tongues, would there have been so many directions earnestly urged upon them concerning the right and prudent use of them? Could they tell themselves whether they had received such gifts or not; and did not they know, whether others among them showed such gifts or not, or practised such powers? If these things had not been thus, would this method of argument have recommended the persons or the doctrine of the apostles to them, who were declining from both; would it not have exposed both to contempt and ridicule? There were then certainly supernatural and uncommon gifts bestowed on the apostles, and the first converts to Christianity, which were testimonies of a divine commission from heaven.

12. I shall mention but one particular more. It appears from the books of the New Testament, that we have the concurring testimony of divers persons. For the history of our Saviour's preaching and miracles, has the names of four different writers; and the authors of the

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epistles make references to many of the facts set forth. The difference of style, manner of expression, method and way of arguing upon some facts, sufficiently assure us they did not all come from one hand; nay, the omissions of some things in one gospel, mentioned by another; the different order in which matters are related; the seeming contrarieties in some lesser matters may satisfy us that the three former evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are three independent witnesses; as for St. John, indeed there are reasons to suppose he was acquainted with, and had seen the other gospels, before he wrote his. The smaller differences in some circumstances of little or no moment, are so far from rendering the whole less credible, that they really add strength to it, by preventing all suspicion of concert. The agreement is, upon the whole, so great, that it is hardly possible for four persons to write a history of so many considerable things; to deliver an account of so many discourses, parables delivered on various occasions, so many miracles, so many precepts, rules, reflections, as the history of our Saviour contains, with a greater harmony and agreement than is here done, unless they had met together, or corresponded together for the performance of the work; and as it appears from the difference before mentioned, there was no concert, so far from being a diminution, they are a confirmation of their truth and credibility. The design and tendency of the apostles preaching, is conformable to the doctrine delivered by our Saviour in his lifetime, in the main: he did not indeed address himself to Gentiles, in his ordinary preaching, it is true. When he sent forth the twelve in his lifetime, he commanded them, saying, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles: and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Matt. x. 5, 6; whereas the apostles did after his ascension preach to Gentiles as well as Jews, and asserted that they might be saved as well as the Jews. But the directions he gave them at first, it is plain, were not intended to be always binding. He gave sufficient hints in his discourses of this event in his lifetime, in some discourses, made in the hearing of the Pharisees and Scribes, and others, as far as he thought proper at that time, and as they were able to bear it: he spoke very plainly to the woman of Samaria, when he told her, "the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father," John iv. 21; and that the true worshippers of God, who serve him in spirit and truth, in whatever place they called upon him, would be accepted of him; and before he ascended he gave them orders to teach all nations: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matt. xxviii. 19.

These are all the particulars I shall produce on the internal credibility of this gospel history, the marks and characters of truth observable in the books of the New Testament. The points I have mentioned are, 1. These books bear the names of particular persons, except only the epistle to the Hebrews. 2. They are written in a language and style suited to the character of the persons whose names they bear. 3. Here are characters and notes of times, as, that such a thing happened when Herod was king of Judea, or when Pilate was governor. 4. The design of this history, and of the first peaching of the gospel, has nothing in it that should tempt men to forgery and invention. 5. We find here a just and natural representation of matters, with all the appearances of likelihood and probability. 6. The impartiality of this history is another mark of its truth: many things are mentioned to appearance, and in the eye of the world disadvantageous to Christ: many things to appearance, and others in reality, disadvantageous to the first disciples, and first publishers of the gospel: and many disorders and miscarriages of the first converts to Christianity. 7. The remarkable plainness and simplicity of the narration. 8. Here are many facts and circumstances related in a manner that they might easily be confuted if not true. 9. Here are evident marks of the honesty and integrity of the persons engaged in the first publishing of the gospel, who were the witnesses of the main facts here related, and on which the truth of the gospel depends. 10. Likewise that they were not persons of enthusiastic principles. 11. That miracles were wrought, and extraordinary gifts conferred upon many persons, appears from directions given in letters to persons supposed to have themselves seen these works, and shared in these benefits. 12. It appears from the books themselves, that here is a harmony and agreement in these facts between divers independent witnesses, who did not write in concert and correspondence together.

These particulars are sufficient for the making out this argument, and to satisfy us that these writers have all the characters of truth and probability, which any history can have. Perhaps no

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history besides has them all in so eminent agreement: scarce any facts whatsoever are so well supported: and if they are true, we have the highest reason to rest assured our religion is true, and came from God.

This was what I was to prove; and if, in prosecution of this argument, in which I have made numerous references to passages of the sacred scriptures, I have illustrated any passage of scripture, or if any thing that has been here said, may serve to raise your attention to the writings of the New Testament, or to direct you in the making farther remarks in the course of your private reading; then another valuable end has likewise been answered.

And shall we leave this religion; Christ, who has the words of eternal life? Shall we exchange the certain proofs of a future life, for the uncertain obscure arguments of immortality in Plato and Cicero?

SERMON VII.

THE MODERATION OF CHRISTIANS TO BE KNOWN TO ALL MEN.

Let your moderation be known unto all men.—Philip. iv. 5.

This direction being near the end of St. Paul's epistles, where are divers exhortations put down without any very nice and exact connection with each other; the coherence may not afford much light for settling the precise meaning.

I therefore immediately proceed to consider the meaning of the word moderation. And in the next place (which will be the principal subject of our discourse) I would show what is implied in this exhortation, as addressed to Christians, that their "moderation should be known unto all men."

I. In the first place we will consider what is the meaning of the word "moderation." And though the coherence alone may not be sufficient to determine the precise meaning, yet it is not fit that we should quite overlook it. "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again, I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand: be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God."

In our language, the word "moderation" may denote moderate affections for worldly things, and contentedness of mind with a small portion of the good things of this life, and satisfaction in a low or middling station, or whatever the condition be which we are in, without aspiring after great things.

But that is not the direct intention of the apostle here. And there are some other places where the original word is used, which will lead us to the proper meaning of it. Tertullus pleading in behalf of the Jews against Paul, entreats the attention of the governor in this manner, as in our translation: "I pray thee, that thou wouldst hear us of thy clemency, a few words," Acts xxiv. 4. Where the original word for "clemency" is the same, which here in the text is rendered "moderation:" and therefore we are led hereby to understand mildness, equity. Again: "Now I Paul beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," 2 Cor. x. 1.

That therefore is the sense in which we are to take the word in this place. It is equivalent to mildness, equity, gentleness: and, it is easy to be perceived, this virtue has some respect to offences and injuries, or to such persons and things as are some way offensive and provoking.

II. In the second place we should consider what is implied in this direction, or exhortation, as given to Christians—"Let your moderation be known unto all men."

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They will, I apprehend, fulfil and obey this precept, if their moderation, that is, their mildness, be conspicuous, eminent and remarkable.

And it may be supposed that the moderation, or the mildness, the equity, the gentleness of any men will be conspicuous and well known in the world, if it appear in their conduct toward many persons, upon a variety of occasions, in different circumstances, and if it be general among them: not in some few only, but in many, in all, or most of them.

1. The mildness of any body of men, or of Christians, will be conspicuous and well known, if it appear in their conduct toward many persons.

Divers particulars do here offer themselves to our observation: for we may soon perceive several branches of this virtue particularly recommended by Paul in his epistles.

And doubtless, one instance of mildness, meekness and patience, is carrying it well toward those that differ from us, and treat us as enemies, or in an unkind and unfriendly manner. As a learned interpreter says, the apostle here considers the Philippians as in a state of persecution: to which state gentleness or meekness is peculiarly suited: and therefore the meaning of this exhortation is, 'However you suffer, let your moderation and gentleness be conspicuous to all 'men, and particularly to those at whose hands you suffer.' Or, as another writer paraphraseth the text, with its subsequent motive to obedience: 'Be not rigorous in insisting upon your 'utmost right, nor impatient in suffering wrong; but let your temper and composure of mind 'be manifest to all sorts of people, and upon all occasions. For consider that the Judge is not 'far off, who will certainly make you amends for all your condescensions, and reward all 'your patience.'

It is very likely that this is one thing here particularly intended by St. Paul, and indeed, it is what must tend to render men's mildness well known and conspicuous in the world: if they behave and carry it well under sufferings, or toward those who are injurious to them, and are the instruments of their sufferings: when they forbear opprobrious and abusive language, and keep their temper, and behave decently toward all men suitably to their several characters; whether magistrates, and others of superior rank, or toward those of mean condition: when they can express good-will toward those who persecute them for innocent opinions, which they think they have good reason to believe and profess.

If men, instead of allowing themselves the liberty of reproachful language, and loud and clamourous complaints upon such occasions, do with evident tokens of sincerity express their good-will toward those who evil entreat them, praying that they may be convinced of their mistake, and that the favours of Providence may be poured down upon them; this is a very laudable and amiable behaviour.

Farther, men's moderation will be eminent and conspicuous, if under such sufferings they show mildness and equity toward their enemies and persecutors of all sorts. We can take hard usuage better of some than of others. The same treatment is more offensive and provoking in one man than in another. It might be more grievous and afflictive to the Christians in the time of the apostles, to suffer persecution from the Jews than from the Gentiles. With the former they agreed in many points. They worshipped the same God. They received their ancient scriptures; and believed in him whom their prophets foretold: whilst the Gentiles knew not God: and the gods they worshipped were esteemed by the Christians as well as the Jews to be no gods, but idols and vanities; and one great design of their religion was, to detect the falsehood and absurdity of all idolatrous worship, and overthrow it.

It may be also more grievous and offensive to be persecuted by former friends, and the members of our own family. And to be mild and patient under injuries from them, will show great moderation.

Another branch of moderation toward such as differ from us is, mildness and gentleness in all debates and arguments for the truth of our religion: which we find recommended in the writings of Christ's apostles. Says St. Peter: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear," 1 Ep. iii. 15. That direction seems to be addressed to Christians in general. St. Paul, speaking more especially of those who are in the ministerial office, says: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth," 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

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Whether it be any just ground of offence, that others differ from us or not; yet men are apt too often to take it amiss, that others differ from them, and yield not to the force of those arguments, which convince and satisfy themselves. It is therefore a branch of mildness, and very laudable, to bear patiently with those who differ from us in point of religion, and calmly to propose our best arguments, and be willing to renew those methods of conviction which hitherto have been ineffectual.

Moreover, knowledge, or the opinion of it, puffeth up. The bare knowledge of some truths, which others are ignorant of, is made the ground of a haughty and insolent behaviour. The Jewish people scorned subjection to heathen magistrates; and there was danger that Christians would follow their example. Some Christian servants were ready to despise their heathen masters: which is the reason of divers exhortations in the apostolical epistles. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work: to speak evil of no man, to be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient," Titus iii. 1—3. "Servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh," Col. iii. 22. "Servants, be obedient unto them which are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ," Eph. vi. 5.

It is also a part of gentleness to do good to all men in distress, whether agreeing in sentiment with us, or not: considering them as sharers with us in the same human nature, though they do not partake in the same spiritual privileges with ourselves. As St. Paul's directions are: "And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men; especially unto them who are of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 9, 10.

This is one branch of moderation, equity and mildness; to carry it well toward enemies, and those who are of other sentiments in things of a religious nature, and do good to them if they are in any respect indigent and necessitous.

There are other branches of moderation and equity relating to those who are of the same religion with us: who believe in one God, as we do, and are servants and followers of one Lord, even Jesus Christ. "Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God," 1 Cor. x. 32.

The equity and moderation to be practised by the strong and weak Christians, one toward another, is a point largely and particularly treated by the apostle in the fourteenth and fifteenth to the Romans, and in some chapters of his epistles to the Corinthians. "Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another who is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth," Rom. xiv. 1—3. This is mildness, this is moderation in matters of small moment.

There is another branch of mildness recommended by St. Paul, to be practised upon occasion of some falls, or actions plainly contrary to the Christian doctrine and profession. Such persons, if they are not hardened, are to be treated with gentleness. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted," Gal. vi. 1. "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed—Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother," 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

And the Corinthians, who had offended so greatly, the apostle directs to be received and comforted upon repentance. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest such an one should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow." 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7.

There is a mildness to be shown to our brethren from whom we received some injuries, or who are defective in some regards due to us. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: if any man have a quarrel against any. Even as Christ forgave you, so do ye," Col. iii. 13.

And to the Corinthians St. Paul writes in this manner: "Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, no not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? For brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong?

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Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" 1 Ep. vi. 5—7. Such instances as these there are of moderation and mildness toward one another, or our Christian friends and brethren.

Carrying it well toward each other, notwithstanding a different sentiment and practice in matters of lesser moment:

In case of falls, or transgressions against plain precepts of the gospel, and the just rules of all true religion; receiving such upon repentance:

Reproving and admonishing those who offend, in some instances with mildness:

Gentleness toward those who offend, or are defective in their behaviour toward us:

And submitting to some loss and damage, if it be of no great consequence; without occasioning a great deal of disturbance about small matters.

And that is one thing included in this direction: moderation toward many persons; and persons of different characters and relations to us: those who are not of the same religion, and on that account are, in some respect, our enemies, and averse to us: and to those who are of the same religious sentiments in the main.

2. Another thing included in this direction may be, practising moderation upon a great variety of occasions. Indeed this has been already shown under the former particular; for I have mentioned various instances of mildness, both toward unbelievers and to believers.

But all occasions for the practising of equity can scarce be enumerated; however, a man of a mild and equitable principle will be ready to show it, when the circumstances of things require it: he will be slow to wrath, backward to judge and censure: he will remember the Lord's command; "Judge not, that ye be not judged:" and St. Paul's direction; "Judge nothing before the time:" he will not be over-ready to receive charges against any, or credit disadvantageous reports and surmises. Equitable persons have also a respect to the stations and characters of men, agreeably to that direction of St. Paul to Timothy, "Against an elder receive not an accusation but before two or three witnesses," 1 Ep. v. 19. This is another thing included in this direction: Let your moderation be known unto all men, show it, and practise it upon many occasions.

3. Show moderation in every circumstance, not only when you are in adversity and affliction, but also when you are in prosperity and honour; not only when you are few in number, and weak in comparison of others who differ from you, but when you are in power and are the most in number. If in change of circumstances you are not changed, nor your outward conduct altered, it will appear, that your minds are governed by some reasonable principle of action: but if men who were once, to appearance, meek and quiet under afflictions, become arrogant and imposing, upon their being exalted, their former submission and peaceableness will be imputed to fear and an abject mind, not unto mildness of temper, or a serious regard to the rule of right.

And as change of circumstances for the better is very apt to affect men's minds, good men need directions and cautions in such a case. The gentiles who received the word of the gospel from the apostles of Christ, were doubtless at first much pleased with the kind regard shown them, and thankful for the privileges vouchsafed them: but yet, when their numbers increased, and their freedom from the law of Moses was better established, they soon began to show some tokens of scorn and disdain that were not becoming. St. Paul perceived it, though himself the apostle of the gentiles, and the great patron of their liberty; and therefore inserted that argument in the epistle to the Romans: "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou a wild olive wert grafted in among them,—boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.—Be not high-minded, but fear," Rom. xi. 17, 18, 20.

4. The moderation or mildness of Christians, or any other people, will be conspicuous and known to all men, when it is a prevailing temper, and is general among them, in men of every relation, and every condition.

When they who teach the principles of religion, strive not to act with a high hand, and advance their authority, but recommend and enforce their doctrine and their admonitions by reasons and arguments, and renew and repeat their instructions for the sake of those who are not so tractable, or so acute and ready as others: labour, both in season and out of season; behave not as lords of other men's faith, but helpers of their joy, and their servants for Christ's sake, to assist their proficiency in knowledge and virtue; and as St. Peter's expressions are, "not as

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lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock," 1 Ep. v. 3; and when they who are instructed and taught, suffer the word of exhortation, considering that they who act faithfully in their office of teaching others, "watch over their souls, as they that must give account:" and are desirous "that they may do it with joy, and not with grief," Heb. xiii. 17; for that would not be profitable for any.

And St. Paul directs the Corinthians with regard to Timothy, though young and unexperienced, or not equally experienced with some of greater age: "See that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do: let no man therefore despise him," 1 Cor. xvi. 10. It may be a branch of equity to esteem some men "highly in love for their work's sake," 1 Thess. v. 13, without indulging too nice a taste, and censorious critical remarks upon every performance.

In like manner with regard to some private relations: it will tend to render men's moderation and mildness conspicuous in the world, when it is generally practised among them: when parents endeavour to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, without provoking them to wrath," Ep. vi. 4; and when children cheerfully acknowledge the just authority of parents, and obey them in all things, so far as can be done with a good conscience: and when others, intrusted with the education and care of inspecting young persons, break not their tender spirits by unreasonable harshness and severity, but excite and encourage them by reason, good words, and kind usage: and they of younger years show themselves some indication of their being sensible a regard and respect is due to those who instil knowledge into their minds, and appear to be concerned to lay the foundation of their future welfare and prosperity in soul and body.

When masters give unto their servants that which is just and equal, forbear threatening; and when servants answer not again, and are faithful and diligent in the service, not only of those masters who are exceeding good and tender, but even of those likewise who at some times are froward and severe.

When, finally, men of every condition, high and low, those who have fewer advantages of reading and observation, as well as others learned, knowing, and acquainted with the world; when even these also join in approving moderation and equity, and can say something in favour of the several branches of moderation before-mentioned, with regard to men of different sentiments, or to those who fall and offend, or are injurious in some instances; as, that there is between all men a parity or equality of nature: that we are all weak and fallible: that Jesus Christ our Lord bid us not to judge, lest we be judged: that our Lord graciously received Peter and the other apostles, though in the time of his great temptation they were offended in him: that the Christian religion was at first propounded and spread in the world, upon the ground of reason and evidence, without human power and authority: and that they apprehend the setting before men the evidences of its truth, which appear in the New Testament, will be the most effectual way to advance the true interest of religion. That Christ said, "his kingdom is not of this world:" and that he bid his disciples to consider themselves as brethren, and not to exalt themselves one above another: that in the New Testament men are directed to try or prove all things, which must suppose a right to judge upon evidence, as things appear to men, after serious and impartial examination and consideration.

These are particulars by which the moderation of any sect, or body of men will become conspicuous, and known to all men: when they show moderation and equity to many persons, upon various occasions, in different circumstances, and when it is a prevailing general virtue among them.

Let me add a few remarks.

1. Christians have the most forcible arguments and inducements, and the best assistances of any men, for the practice of moderation, mildness and equity. Forasmuch as they have had experience of the mercies of God, and Christ Jesus, in forgiving them, and showing toward them great mildness, tenderness and equity: they have also been taught to love one another, and all men, so as no other men have been taught: and the principles of love will mightily dispose to mildness and gentleness; for "love suffereth long, and is kind; it is not easily provoked, is not puffed up; it beareth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things," 1 Cor. xiii. moreover, they know and expect the righteous judgment of God, "who will render to every one according to his work." The Lord is at hand, and will do right to those who are injured:

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and the virtue of those who suffer patiently, and endure according to the will of God, shall be fully rewarded. The osberving the rule immediately preceding this text, will be of use here: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice." If men are well pleased with themselves, and are easy in their own minds, and have cause to rejoice in God, as their defence and portion, few things can happen that will transport them beyond the bounds of moderation and equity.

2. The practice of mildness and moderation does not imply an approbation of any thing that is evil, any more than the long-suffering and forbearance which God exercises toward sinners, ought to be understood to countenance, and be an approbation of their evil ways. But this is a state of trial, not of judgment or retribution: and as the divine long-suffering is designed to afford men an opportunity, and to lead them to repentance, so the mildness practised by men one toward another, will conduce to the peace of society, the present welfare of particular persons, and will be an excellent means of reclaiming men from errors, both in judgment and practice.

3. We may hence infer, that moderation will be for the honour, interest, and advantage of the Christian religion. I say, that from this direction of the apostle, we may reasonably conclude, that mildness, or moderation, or equity among Christians, will be to the honour of their religion; otherwise, certainly the apostle had not directed Christians to let their "moderation be known to all men." Some might possibly be apt to think that rigour, harshness, severity, might be more useful than moderation and mildness. But since, as before observed, mildness toward men is not an approbation of any thing that is wrong: and men may be differently treated according to their different conduct; [they who are unruly are to be warned; and still some may be reproved with authority] moderation or mildness, in the several instances above-named, will not be hurtful, but advantageous.

If any men, any societies or bodies of men, are remarkable for mildness and moderation towards one another, and other men, it will conduce to their honour and interest; others will be invited and induced to join themselves to them, and take upon themselves the observation of the mild rules of virtue taught by them, joined with much meekness, moderation, and forbearance toward those unruly, disobedient, and misled upon many occasions.

And indeed, we may be assured, that moderation or mildness is a great virtue, it being often commanded and enforced under many other words in the writings of the apostles, besides those which have been quoted in the several parts of this discourse. "For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness," Gal. v. 22. And St. James says, "The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy," James iii. 17.

SERMON VIII.

ON KEEPING THE HEART.

Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life. Prov. iv. 23.

The aphorisms and maxims, counsels and directions of this book of Proverbs, are oftentimes put down, without any dependence on each other, or particular regard to the order of things: in this chapter there is a connection; and the precepts here delivered, recommend themselves to our attention and regard, not only by their internal worth, and real usefulness, but also by the order in which they are placed, and the full and copious manner in which the argument is treated.

To observe only the latter part of the chapter, from ver. 20 to the end. First, there is a very earnest and affectionate call to men, especially the younger, carefully to attend to, and keep the advices delivered, assuring them that they are things of the greatest use and importance; which earnestly proceeds from a full persuasion of the truth and worth of the things said;

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an apprehension that those to whom they are offered are too apt to neglect them, or too liable to be misled after all; and from an ardent desire of the welfare of those who are addressed to. "My son, attend to my words, incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes: keep them in the midst of thine heart; for they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh," ver. 20—22. As if he said, 'I must again once more repeat my 'request, that you will take heed to my advice, and seriously consider these exhortations which 'proceed from a sincere affection for your welfare. Peruse them over and over, keep them per-'petually in mind, and lay them up in your memory as a precious treasure. For they will con-'tribute greatly to the happiness of all who become thoroughly acquainted with them: they will 'be of use to men of every temper, and in every condition; and prove an admirable support 'under troubles and afflictions.'[a]

Then follows a methodical monition, consisting of several parts; first, directing the government of the heart, or the mind, and its powers; then the lips and eyes, and the feet.

Ver. 23. "Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life." That is, the counsels I give you are such as these: in the first place, and above all things, set a strict guard upon your thoughts and affections, and all the inward motions of your soul; for the good or bad conduct of life depends very much upon this, and consequently your welfare or misery, here and hereafter.

Ver. 24. "Put away from thee a froward mouth: and perverse lips put far from thee." Avoid sinful words, and be upon your guard not to transgress with your lips: for as some interpreters[b] suppose, here is a twofold admonition; not to sin with the tongue ourselves, nor to hearken to the evil speeches of others. 'Set a watch upon thy ears, and upon thy mouth; nor speak 'things contrary to truth, righteousness, or religion; not listening to those that do, but banishing 'such as far as possible, from all friendship and familiarity.'

Ver. 25. "Let thine eyes look right on: and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. That is, as some paraphrase and explain these words:[c] 'Direct all thine actions by a good intention to a right end, and keep thy mind fixed upon the way that leads to it.' Or, as others,[d] 'The eyes also are dangerous inlets to the heart: therefore watch them well, that they do not 'gaze about, and fasten upon every object that invites them: but let them be fixed upon one 'scope, as thy thoughts ought to be, and from which let nothing divert them.'

Ver. 26. "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." Act not without thought and consideration; but weigh and consider well beforehand, especially in things of any moment, or that are liable to doubt and suspicion, whether they are agreeable to the rule of right; then thy works and actions will be such as will bear to be canvassed and examined: you will be able to reflect upon them with pleasure afterwards, and they will also be approved by others that are wise and virtuous.

Ver. 27. "Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil:" hereby many understand to be meant: 'Flee extremes: avoid superstition on the one hand, and neg-'lect of religion on the other:' but it seems to me that the direction may be as well understood to contain an admonition to steadiness in religion and virtue: 'And do not suffer yourselves to 'be drawn aside from the path of virtue, or to divert at all upon any consideration from the 'straight line of duty: let no consideration whatever, neither enticements of friends, or provo-'cations of enemies, prosperous or cross events, move you to depart at all from the way of your 'duty; and most studiously preserve yourselves from doing any kind of iniquity.'

So is this context.

Our design at present is, to consider the leading direction in this exhortation, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." And I shall speak briefly to the several particulars in the text.

I shall consider,

I. What is meant by the heart.

II. What we are to understand by keeping it.

III. The manner in which the heart ought to be kept: "with all diligence."

IV. The argument and reason why we ought so to keep the heart: "out of it are the issues of life."

[a] See Patrick. [b] Patrick. [c] Pool. [d] Patrick.

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To which I shall add:

V. A reflection or two by way of application.

I. We should briefly observe what is meant by the heart. But it is needless to enlarge here, or to take notice of the several more particular senses and acceptations of the word in scripture; where it may sometimes denote the understanding more especially; as when it is said, "their foolish heart was darkened," Rom. i. 21, or the "memory;" as when the Psalmist says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart," Ps. cxix. 11, or the conscience; "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things," 1 John iii. 20. But the more common and general sense of the word is, the "mind," the "soul;" and so these texts just mentioned are also understood.

I suppose then that here, as very frequently in the metaphorical style of scripture, the "heart" is put for the "soul," or the "inward man," the soul and its faculties: or, the "mind," together with all its powers and faculties, and their several operations; or the thoughts, affections, intentions and designs of man.

II. The second thing to be considered is, what we are to understand by "keeping the heart." And this expression is supposed by many to be metaphorical: keep thy heart, as a temple, say some, pure and undefiled. Or, keep thy heart, say others, as a garrison: the soul being, as it were, besieged by many enemies. Some also carry on the metaphor in the other directions that follow, relating to the mouth, the eyes, the feet; and they say, 'As they that 'defend a city, set a strong guard at the gates and posterns; so do you upon your ears, and 'mouth, and eyes.' But I apprehend, we are not obliged to attend to such a metaphor here. The word "keeping" seems to denote all that can be meant by a due care of the mind, and its actions or thoughts: "keep thy heart;" observe it, cultivate and improve it; watch it, and attend to all its motions; guard against every evil thought, as well as against evil actions: and employ and exercise the mind well.

This I take to be the general meaning and design of the expression, "keep thy heart." Let me mention some particulars, as contained and implied herein.

1. Keep, or take care of thy heart: that is, that you cultivate and improve it, and that you have right sentiments of things. It is an observation of the same wise man, whose words we are commenting, "That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good," Prov. xix. 2. There is a woe pronounced against those "that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light, and light for darkness: that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter," Isai. v. 20. It is one great and main design of the teachings and instructions of the prophets and the wise men under the Old Testament, to give them right sentiments concerning religion: to help them to know and understand what is good and what is evil, and what God most approves of, and delights in: that though he had enjoined for wise reasons, upon the people under his special care at that time, numerous external washings, purifications, and various sacrifices and offerings at the temple; that, nevertheless, truth and righteousness in their dealings with one another, and a serious awful apprehension of the Divine Majesty, the former of all things, and sentiments of love and gratitude to him for all his benefits, were the most valuable parts and branches, and acts of religion. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Mich. vi. 8. "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt offerings," Hosea vi. 6. And there are very frequent and earnest exhortations to seek religious knowledge: there are many such in this book of Proverbs. "Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise; and apply thine heart unto my knowledge," ch. xxii. 17. "That thy trust may be in the Lord, I have made known unto thee this day, even unto thee. Have not I written unto thee excellent things in counsel and knowledge? that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth: that thou mightest answer the words of truth, to them that send unto thee?" ver. 19—21. This knowledge is excellent and useful: to know the differences of things: what God most approves of: to have right apprehensions of the greatness, goodness, truth, and faithfulness, and purity of God. That he is a God over all gods, the former of all things, the governor of the world, able and willing to reward them that diligently seek him: and that blessed are all they that serve him, and put their trust in him.

2. Another thing implied in keeping the heart, or in the care of the mind, here recommended, is, to form fixed purposes and resolutions of acting according to the rule of right. The

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first care is, that the mind be well informed: secondly, that it be well resolved. We are to see, that we not only know what is good, and refuse the evil: but we are to choose the one, and resolve to avoid the other. "My son, give me thy heart," Ps. xxiii. 26. And this is the design of the exhortation at the beginning of this chapter, to determine men to the choice of religion and her ways. "Get wisdom, get understanding—forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee: exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her." And Psalm cxix. 30. "I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me. Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God," ver. 115. There should be a fixed and determined purpose of mind, to avoid all known sin, and perform all known duty, and to resist temptations when they assault us. The way of religion should be our willing choice, considering its excellence, and the advantages that attend it: and because of the deceitfulness of our hearts, and the face and danger of external temptations, our resolutions should be very explicit and firm. Psalm cxix. 106. "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." Psalm xvii. 3. "Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing: I am purposed, that my mouth shall not transgress."

3. In this keeping the heart is implied a direction to govern the affections. As the judgment should be well informed; and the will rightly fixed and determined: so also the affections should be well ordered and governed.

Particularly, our desires and aversions, our joy and grief, our hopes and fears, our love and hatred.

(1.) Our desires and aversions. They should be well regulated. The highest esteem should be placed upon those things that are most valuable in themselves, and most important. Take care that you esteem and desire spiritual and heavenly things, more than worldly and earthly things, that are but temporal. Saith St. John, "Love not the world: neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." But he that doth the will of God abideth for ever," 1 Ep. ii. 15, 16. We should therefore desire to secure a treasure in heaven and an interest in a future happiness, above all earthly possessions and advantages.

(2.) Our joy and grief. The good order of these affections will follow upon that of the two other, if we are serious of, more solicitous for, spiritual and heavenly things: if they have our first esteem, our joy and satisfaction on account of prosperity and success in the pursuit of any advantages will be moderate: and our grief and concern under afflictions and losses, relating to this life, will not be excessive, but within due bounds.

(3.) Our hopes and fears ought also to be regulated. Our chief dependence should be on God, not on man. Our trust and hope should be placed in God, not in creatures. He is infinitely more able, and more equitable than men; and therefore in him we should confide, and make it our chief care to please him, and approve ourselves to him. In his favour is life, and his loving-kindness is better than life. He can bestow a better, and more durable happiness than this world affords: and he will not fail them that trust him according to the directions of his word, and that serve him in the way of his commandments.

Our fears likewise are to be regulated. We are to fear God more than men. This is of importance to right conduct. If men, who had power and influence, did always encourage virtue, and require nothing but what is fit to be done: if their will and pleasure were always reasonable; then we should have no occasion to fear them, whilst we do well. But as the sincere profession of truth is often discountenanced by the powers of this world, and the will of God only is always right, there is need we should be upon our guard against an undue fear of men. Our Lord therefore cautioned his disciples against the fear of men, whose power reached not beyond this life; and rather to fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body, and assign them to everlasting pain and misery.

(4.) We ought also to regulate our love and hatred: I mean now chiefly with regard to our fellow-creatures: our approbation and dislike; our favour or displeasure: that we cherish benevolence, inward good-will; and do not admit groundless resentment and anger, or indulge

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excessive or lasting displeasure. As Solomon says: "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city," Prov. xvi. 32.

This is another thing implied in keeping the heart; governing the affections: particularly, our desires and aversions, joy and grief, hopes and fears, love and hatred.

4. Another thing that may be intended in keeping the heart is, planting and cherishing in the mind good principles and dispositions, and cleansing it from all contrary evil dispositions and propensities. Particularly, it is of importance that we root out pride, and high conceit of ourselves; inward contempt and disdain of other men: and that we cultivate humility of mind; meekness of temper: we should likewise be concerned to improve in religious awe and apprehension of the Divine Majesty, and take care to be in the fear of God all the day long, and all the days of our life. For the fear of the Lord is the beginning, the source, and principle of wisdom. We should also cherish a faith in invisible things, which will be a great security of every virtue, and encourage a right conduct.

5. And lastly, by keeping the heart may be meant and intended, a due care and concern that the mind be well employed.

There must be a guard set upon the acts or operations of the mind: and the thoughts should be exercised on fit objects. Vain thoughts should not lodge within us: no evil thoughts should be indulged and cherished. The mind should be employed and taken up, not in things useless and insignificant; but much about things profitable and important: we should contemplate the works of God, meditate on his word, consider our ways, reflect upon ourselves, confirm our resolutions of virtue, and our abhorrence of evil; form good designs, and think and contrive how we may best bring them to pass. We should frequently ascend in acts of humble, believing, grateful devotions to God.

That is the second thing, what it is to "keep the heart." 1. It implies a taking care, that the mind be furnished with necessary knowledge, and just sentiments of things concerning good and evil. 2. To keep the heart implies a concern to form fixed purposes and resolutions to act according to the rule of right. 3. It implies the government and regulation of the affections. 4. Implanting and cherishing good dispositions, and rooting out those that are evil and sinful. 5. It implies a care that the mind be well employed.

III. The next thing observable in the words is, the manner in which the heart ought to be kept: "with all diligence:" literally, according to the Hebrew, "with all keeping." The connection, which was shown before, helps us to understand distinctly and clearly the design of this expression in this exhortation. This is the first counsel: then follow those before taken notice of, and briefly paraphrased. "Put away from thee a froward mouth: let thine eyes look right on:" and "ponder the path of thy feet:" that is, care ought to be taken of these; that we sin not with our lips, and that our actions are righteous and virtuous. But the first and chief care ought to be about the heart: the mind, and its inward operations: "Keep thy heart with all diligence."

IV. The fourth particular observable in the words is, the argument and motive so "to keep the heart:" it is taken from the importance of so doing: "Out of it are the issues of life." Our good, or our bad conduct, and the consequences of each depend hereupon. As the heart is, so is the man: so will be the words and actions. The streams must partake of the qualities of the fountain. Or, as our blessed Lord says: "A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit: for every tree is known by its fruit.—A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, that which is evil; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Luke vi. 43—45. And to the like purpose in Matthew xii. 33—35. Again, "Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites: for ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter; but within they are full of extortion and excess," Matt. xxiii. 25, 26. You aim at a fair outward appearance, by observing those acts of devotion, and that zeal for the temple, that is taking among men; without aiming at virtuous habits, and consequently are defective in acts of justice and goodness. "Thou blind pharisee! cleanse first that which is within the cup, and the platter; that the outside of them may be clean also." First cleanse your heart, and cultivate the sincere upright disposition of mind; and your life will be an uniform pattern of virtue, consisting in a devout and fervent worship of God, and works of

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righteousness and goodness among men: which will be really worthy and valuable; truly becoming, acceptable and agreeable.

This is the argument, to keep the heart with all diligence: "Out of it are the issues of life:" the words and actions depend hereupon. If the heart be quite neglected, the life will be very irregular: if the heart be well kept, cultivated, observed, and watched, your life will be excellent and commendable.

Moreover the different consequences of good and bad conduct, as already hinted, depend hereupon. You cannot otherwise approve yourselves to God, but must be rejected by him who sees and knows the heart, as well as the outward actions.

I have now explained the several parts of the text. I have shown what is here meant by the heart. Wherein keeping it consists. The manner in which it ought to be kept. The importance of so doing: or the arguments and motives so to keep it.

V. I shall conclude with two reflections only, in the way of application.

1. We hence perceive, that true religion, even under the ancient dispensation, did not consist only in external worship, and good actions, but also in pious dispositions of the mind. Indeed the laws of Moses, being many of them civil and political, are very much concerned about words only, and external actions: and many men were too apt to content themselves with a fair, outward, and visible appearance in the eye of men, and some tolerable regularity of outward actions and behaviour. But it is certain, they were obliged to more than this; and good men observed their thoughts as well as their actions. And the wise, and those who were favoured with a prophetical gift or commission, faithfully represented to men the extent, purity, and perfection of the divine law. Of a good man it is said: "The law of his God is in his heart," Ps. xxxvii. 31. And the Psalmist prays, that God would "incline his heart unto his testimonies," and "not to covetousness," Ps. cxix. 36. Again: "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes," ver. 80. Men were reminded by the prophets, that "the Lord searcheth the heart, and tries the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings," Jer. xvii. 10. And they were called upon to "mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace," Ps. xxxvii. 37.

2. Let us attend to this counsel of Solomon, and the importance of it. And do we not see one great reason of the many defects and errors of our conduct? that we do not keep our heart with all diligence. We have too much neglected that which is a principal point: considering that God equally knows all things, we ought to be equally concerned about our thoughts, and our outward actions. But there is also another reason for a strict care of the heart; that so much depends upon it. Uniform virtue and eminence therein, will never be attained without it. We shall also, for want of this care, be very liable to be surprised into sin many ways. Is not this the occasion of many of our failings? that the inward principle of faith in God is weak, and fear of men prevailing. The love of this world is unsubdued: and our affections are not set on things above, as they should be, but rather on things of this earth. How can it be expected we should be prepared for temptations, if we do not carefully keep our heart? No wonder that we often transgress with our lips, or that imprudencies, failings, and even greater faults appear in our behaviour, if we do not watch our hearts. It is very likely that there will be many bad consequences of this neglect: we shall be oftentimes unsatisfied and discontented with our condition, possibly without any reason. We shall greatly misbehave under afflictions; prosperity will be very dangerous: and the offences and provocations we meet with from men, will mightily disconcert us, and occasion undue resentment and displeasure.

If we are sensible of a defect this way: let us be, for the future, more frequent in meditation and consideration: let us be more careful of our inward temper, and the frame of our heart: let us diligently cultivate right sentiments, holy resolutions, and good habits of the mind: let us learn the regulation and government of our affections, and how to employ our thoughts upon profitable subjects. It is a thing of great importance. Diligence herein will be very advantageous; and negligence very prejudicial and detrimental in the end. "Keep [then] thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life."

END OF POSTHUMOUS SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

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TWO SCHEMES OF A TRINITY CONSIDERED,

AND

THE DIVINE UNITY ASSERTED.

FOUR DISCOURSES UPON PHILIPPIANS ii. 5—11.

Acts ii. 22. *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.* Chap. v. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* Chap. x. 37, 38. *That word you know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed, &c.*

THE EDITOR'S ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Editor of the following Discourses accounts it no small happiness, that, by a late favourable accident, he has it in his power to present them to the public. They show themselves to have been part of a course of ministerial services; and a memorandum, under the author's own hand, makes it probable that they were delivered from the pulpit, to a very respectable society of Christians, so long ago as the year 1747.

The name of the author, as he himself did not place it there, is not given in the title page. An omission, which the judicious reader, it is supposed, will reckon to be of no great moment. And respecting the author himself, it may be most truly observed, that he was always far from affecting, in any degree, the character or influence of a Rabbi, or dogmatical teacher; and could not at any time wish his name,—however justly endeared to many of his cotemporaries, or sure to go down with distinguished esteem and honour to latest posterity,—should be accounted of the least weight, in the balance of reason, on any argument excepting that of testimony. He has now been several years removed from our world. But, as the controversy, to which these discourses have respect, does still survive, and will probably, be yet of long continuance, it cannot but be desirable to all good minds that the largest portion of his excellent spirit may be retained among us, communicated, and diffused: in order that controversies of this nature, for the future, may be carried on, as our most candid author has expressed it, 'without detriment 'either to truth or piety.'

It may, however, be apprehended, that to the curious and attentive readers, who have been happily led into a previous acquaintance with his other valuable and most important works, these discourses will soon make a pleasing discovery of their author. And all such readers, there is no doubt, will be glad to receive the following declaration concerning them, though anonymous.

They are here given with a most strict care and fidelity, agreeable to the author's own manuscript, which he had drawn out fair for the press, with particular directions designed for the printer. And any small additions, which a casual oversight seemed to make requisite, are distinguished by being inclosed in brackets thus: [ ]

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Any attempt of the editor, to recommend such discourses as deserving the attention of the public, could not well be exempted from a charge of officiousness. They are, therefore, cheerfully left to speak for themselves.

All Christians are agreed that the subjects, of which they treat, are very weighty: and ecclesiastical history too sadly shews in what manner the contentions about them have been agitated.

Whatever may be the issue of the arguments suggested,—with respect to the measure of conviction they shall produce in favour of any particular doctrine,—if the temper, with which they are proposed, should prove sufficiently attractive to engage a general imitation, and excite a prevailing diligence to maintain and cultivate it, on all sides, the apparent chief design of the author, and most fervent wishes of the editor, will have their best accomplishment.

Maidstone, August 1, 1784.

DISCOURSE I.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God has highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Philip. ii. 5—11.

In these verses we have at large the apostle's argument to the meekness and condescension before recommended: taken from the example of Christ's humility, and his exaltation, as a reward of it.

Within the compass of a few months I have delivered two practical discourses from the fifth verse of this chapter, explaining the duty of mutual condescension and forbearance, and enforcing it from the example and the reward of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now I am desirous to explain in a more critical manner the words which have been read to you.

I shall be hereby unavoidably led into somewhat controversial: but I hope it will be also practical, and not unprofitable; were it only instructive to some who are not thoroughly acquainted with some controverted points, which yet are thought to be of much moment. Indeed if people will decide in points of any kind, it is fit they should know and understand what they affirm; especially if they take upon them to pass sentences upon those who differ from them. This needs no proof. Certainly no honest and upright man would willingly form a wrong judgment in any case; especially in such a case as this, where, if he be ignorant, he may pass sentence upon himself. I fear this is no uncommon thing. One cannot be disposed to insult any man's ignorance. But when censoriousness is joined therewith, and it becomes troublesome to others, it will be remarked. I think I have met with some good people who have severely condemned Arians, and yet were not orthodox themselves. And if they could have been persuaded to explain their own notion, it would have appeared that they were in the Arian scheme, or very near it. But they were too positive, and too well satisfied of being in the right, to hear any argument from those who would have debated with them, and led them into the merits of the controversy.

Disputes about the person of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity, as is well known, have been exceedingly prejudicial to the Christian cause and interest: and chiefly so, because those disputes have been managed with too much heat: and contending parties on both sides,

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have not been contented to dispute and argue, and then leave it to every one to determine conscientiously according to the best of his own judgment; but would impose their own sense. And if they had the authority, and civil power on their side, would require men under heavy pains and losses to profess, in a word or writing, an assent to their opinion, whether convinced or not. Whereas serious and impartial, free and patient inquiries and debates might have been instructive, and let in light: and different sentiments have been allowed without detriment either to truth or piety.

I hope we may now have an example of this kind: and that all will hear with patience an argument which is intended to be proposed with mildness, though with plainness, free from all reserve and disguise.

In order to understand this text, and to give free scope to every one to judge of its design, according to several apprehensions concerning the person of Christ, it will be needful to consider the several schemes of divines relating to the doctrine of the Trinity. For, as Christians among us have before them, beside what is said in the scriptures, divers determinations upon the doctrine of the Trinity, in catechisms, articles, and liturgies, they will apply those determinations to this, and other texts of scripture.

I have therefore thought that no method will more directly lead to a clear judgment in this point, than to propose and consider the common schemes or ways of thinking of the Deity, which obtain among the professed disciples and followers of Jesus.

The first shall be that which is reckoned the commonly received scheme, and called orthodox and catholic.

In the Assembly's catechism it is said: 'There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, 'the Son, and the Holy Ghost; the same in substance, equal in power and glory.'

The first article of the Church of England is: 'There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker 'and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in the unity of this godhead there 'be three persons, of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the 'Holy Ghost.'

Here certainly ariseth a difficulty. How are we to understand these expressions? And how are they understood by those who use them, and approve of them, and assent to them, as right? "One God, three persons, the same in substance, equal in power and glory: or of one substance, power and eternity." Is it hereby meant, that there are three really distinct minds, or intelligent agents? So we might be apt to conclude from the use of the word person, and saying, that "these three are equal."

Nevertheless there are two different sentiments among those who are called orthodox. Some believe three distinct persons or beings, of the same substance or essence in kind: as three men are distinct, but are of the same kind of substance. Others do not understand the word "person" in the common acceptation. They believe only a modal distinction. They openly say, that in discoursing on the mystery of the Trinity, they do not use the word "person" in what is now the common meaning of that word. We might be disposed to think that these went into the Sabellian scheme, which holds one person only in the Deity, under three different denominations. But yet they deny it, and disclaim Sabellianism, and speak of it as a very pernicious opinion. They say, that though the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are not three distinct beings, or individuals, there is a distinction, which may be represented by that of three perons.

Here then are two different opinions among those who pass for orthodox.

And which is right? that is, which of these is the prevailing and generally received opinion? I answer the latter; [or the opinion of those] who hold only a modal distinction in the Trinity. This appears to me evident from what is called the Athanasian Creed,* which is always allowed by those who bear the denomination of orthodox, to be the standard of the true doctrine of the Trinity. It is to this purpose: 'The catholic faith is this; that we worship one God in Trinity— 'Trinity in Unity: neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. For there is

* I say called the Athanasian Creed, for it is now generally allowed by learned men, that it is not the work of the celebrated Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who flourished in the fourth century, but of some other person long after his time. Nor is it certainly known by whom it was composed. For proof of this I refer to the Benedictine edition of Athanasius's works, tom. II. p. 719, &c.

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'one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the god-
'head of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty
'coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.—The Father
'eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet there are not three eternals,
'but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one
'uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty,
'and the Holy Ghost almighty. And yet there are not three Almighties, but one Almighty.
'So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not
'three Gods, but one God.'

According to this creed, there are "not three eternals, but one eternal, not three Almighties, but one Almighty." So this seems to me. However, let every man judge for himself. And let every man who thinks himself orthodox, examine himself by this creed; whether he be so, or not. For it is not impossible that many well meaning people, of lower rank, may believe a real Trinity of distinct intelligent beings. Yea it is likely, that this is indeed the firm belief and persuasion of great numbers of the vulgar sort among Christians. It may be also the sentiment of some who make no small figure in the learned world.

Nevertheless, I do not think that to be what is called the commonly received doctrine of the church. This appears to me evident from the forecited creed.

Before we proceed to apply this doctrine to the words of the text, it may be proper to observe still more distinctly the received doctrine concerning the Son. The second article of the Church of England is thus. 'The Son, which is the word of the Father, begotten from
'everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took
'man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and
'perfect natures, that is, the godhead and manhood were joined together in one person, never
'to be divided. Whereof is one Christ, very God, and very man; who truly suffered, was dead
'and buried.'

I have taken the words of that article, that I may be sure to avoid all misrepresentation, and that there may be no suspicion of it.

Let us now observe the explication of the text, agreeably to this scheme; which I shall take in the words of a pious annotator.* '"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ
'Jesus." As Christ denied himself for you, so should you for others. "Who being in the form
'of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:" that is, who being the essential image of
'the Father, and enjoying the divine essence and nature with all its glory, knew that it was no
'usurpation in him, to account himself so, and carry himself as such. "But made himself of no
'reputation." Yet he emptied himself of that divine glory and majesty, by hiding it in the vail
'of his flesh: "and took upon him the form of a servant:" that is, the quality and condition of
'a mean person, not of some great man. "And was made in the likeness of men:" that is,
'subject to all the frailties and infirmities of human nature, sin only excepted. "And being
'found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself." By what appeared to all, and by the whole
'tenour of his carriage, he was found to be a true man. "And became obedient unto death,
'even unto the death of the cross." He manifested his obedience, as in all other particulars, so
'in resigning up himself to death, the death of the cross, the most cruel, contemptible, and
'accursed death. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which
'is above every name." Wherefore God advanced his human nature to the highest degree of
'glory, and has given him honour, authority and majesty above all created excellence.'

Upon this interpretation it is easy to remark, that it does not seem exactly to answer the apostle's expressions. It supposes two things to be spoken of, first the Deity, then the humanity of Jesus. I say, it is supposed, that the apostle first speaks of Christ's being "of the divine nature and essence," and therein humbling himself. And the human nature is exalted. Whereas the apostle seems to speak all along of one thing or person. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who made himself of no reputation——Wherefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." He who had humbled himself is exalted. Nor can true Deity either be abased or rewarded.

* Mr. Samuel Clark's Annotations upon the place.

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There is therefore no small difficulty in applying the commonly received opinion concerning Christ, as God, of the same substance, and equal with the Father, to this text. Or, it is not easy to reconcile the doctrine of the apostle in this place, and the commonly received opinion concerning the Trinity.

I shall now conclude with these two remarks.

I. The commonly received doctrine of the Trinity, which is reckoned orthodox, and the doctrine of the Church, is obscure. Indeed it is generally acknowledged to be very mysterious. And it appears to be so from the authentic accounts which have been now given of it. For it is said that there are "three persons in the godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost:" and they are said to be "equal in power and glory." Which expressions seem to intimate, that there are three distinct beings, and minds. But yet, on the other hand, it is as plainly said, that there is "but one eternal, and one Almighty."

These expressions must be allowed to represent an obscure doctrine. Some have said, that it is contradictory.

All I affirm is, that it is obscure, and difficult to be conceived and understood, if it be not absolutely incomprehensible.

II. Secondly, I would observe, that obscure doctrines ought not to be made necessary to salvation. They who consider the general tenour, and great design of the preaching of Christ and his apostles, to all sorts of men, in order to bring them to repentance and holiness, and thereby to everlasting happiness, by the good-will and appointment of God, will be easily led to think that there should not be any doctrines, necessary to be believed, which are of such a nature, that the most metaphysical and philosophical minds can scarcely know what they are, or reconcile them to reason. Therefore the commonly received doctrine of the Trinity, if it be obscure, should not be made a necessary article of a Christian's faith. And yet this is the introduction to the Athanasian Creed: 'Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary, 'that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, 'without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one 'God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity:' and the rest. And the more fully to enforce the necessity of this doctrine, it is repeated again at the end: 'This is the catholic faith. Which 'except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.'

This, and other like creeds, are inserted in almost all the established articles and liturgies in Christendom.

But is not this teaching uncharitableness by authority? And, if any join in such offices of religion, whilst they believe not the creeds which they recite, or are supposed to recite, they are made to pass sentences of condemnation upon themselves.

How great then is the privilege to be at liberty to choose our religion, and that way of worship, which upon a serious consideration, and after careful and impartial examination, we think to be reasonable, scriptural, and edifying!

DISCOURSE II.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.—Philip. ii. 5—11. And what follows.

In a late discourse on this text, I stated and considered the commonly received opinion concerning the Trinity, and the person of Christ in particular.

I now intend to consider another sentiment concerning the person of Christ, and consequently also concerning the Trinity.

Some then suppose the Son to be a spirit, or intelligent agent, subordinate and inferior to the Father. They think that this is what is meant by the Word, spoken of by St. John at the beginning of his gospel. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God:" or a God, as they would translate: not the same with the Father, or

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equal to him, or of the same nature and essence: but said to be God, on account of his great excellence and power, derived to him by the will of the Father. "All things were made by him," that is, by him under the Father, as his instrument, and by his appointment. "And without him was not any thing made that was made."

To the like purpose they understand and explain Col. i. 15, 16. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by him, and for him."

Which words are thus paraphrased by [a] an ingenious and learned commentator, of the sentiment, which I am now endeavouring to represent as fairly as may be——'Since he is the most 'lively visible image of the Father who is the invisible God, and is the first being that was derived 'from him. And that he must be the first derived from him, is from hence evident, that all other 'beings were derived from God the primary and supreme cause of all, through this his Son, by 'whom, as their immediate Author, all things were created, that are in heaven, or that are in 'earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. 'All things were created by him, and to be in subjection to him. He therefore must be before 'all things. And by him all things are preserved. And he is the head of the church, which is 'is his body.'

Heb. i. 1, 2. "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." In his notes upon these last words, the same learned expositor says: 'As from other places it appears, that Christ was employed in 'making the world, so this seems most agreeable to the scope of the writer of the epistle to the 'Hebrews. His intention appears to be, to give the loftiest and most noble account of his 'greatness and dignity, abstractedly from what he proceeds to afterwards, the honour conferred 'upon him at his resurrection. Now since he so expressly mentions that which may seem a less 'instance of his greatness, that "he upholds all things;" it is not probable, that he would omit 'that which was greater, God's creating the worlds by him.'

Of the Word, or Son of God, these learned men do also generally understand Prov. viii. 22—31.

Well, then, the Son being, according to this scheme, the first derived being, and God having made the world by him: what was the station, what the employment, what the dignity of the Son of God before his incarnation?

The learned annotator before quoted, in his notes upon Philip. ii. 9, says: 'The scriptures 'seem to represent this to have been the state of things antecedently to our Saviour's coming 'into the world: that God allotted to the angels provinces and dominions, one being appointed 'to preside over one country, and another over another.——The places as evidences of this, are 'all taken out of Dan. x; where is related a vision of an angel sent to Daniel in the third year 'of Cyrus king of Persia.——Thus he speaks, ver. 13. "The prince of the kingdom of Persia 'withstood me one and twenty days: but lo, Michael, one," or the first "of the chief princes, 'came to help me."——Afterwards, in the two last verses of that chapter, the same angel says: '"Now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia. And when I am gone forth, lo, the 'prince of Græcia shall come. But I will shew thee what is noted in the scripture of truth. 'And there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince." So that, 'as this learned writer proceeds, we have here the prince of Persia, the prince of Græcia, and 'the prince of the Jews, spoken of. And what reason can we have to question, whether the 'like was not the case of the other countries, that they had in like manner their respective pre-'sidents or princes? This leads us farther to consider the state of our Saviour himself before 'his incarnation——As the heathen nations were committed to other angels, the Israelites were 'committed to Christ, who was the angel of the covenant, or of God's covenanted people.' So that learned writer.

There may be different conceptions concerning Christ, among those who must be allowed to be in the main of this opinion. They all suppose the Word, or Son of God, to be a being distinct from God the Father, subordinate and inferior to him. But some may ascribe to him higher dignity than others. [And] we have just now seen, that one and the same person, who thinks

[a] Mr. James Peirce.

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that all things were made by the Son, supposeth him before his incarnation to have had only, or chiefly, the care and government of the Jewish people allotted to him: whilst other angels were appointed presidents or princes of other nations and countries.

One thing ought to be added here. They who are of this sentiment do generally suppose, that this great being, the Word, the Son of God, upon our Saviour's conception and birth, animated the body prepared for him. So that our Saviour had not, properly, a human soul. But the Word, the Son of God, supplied the place of a soul.

The Spirit, or Holy Ghost, the learned men of this sentiment, I presume, take to be a being, or intelligent agent, inferior in power and perfection, not only to God the Father, but likewise to the Son of God.

According to these therefore the Father is the one supreme God over all, absolutely eternal, underived, unchangeable, independent.

The Son is the first derived being from the Father, and under him employed in creating, and also preserving and upholding the world, with, as some say, an especial allotment of the presidentship over the people of Israel.

The Spirit is a third person, also derived from the Father, and of power and perfection inferior to the Son.

I have endeavoured to give here, as well as elsewhere, a true representation. If I have mistaken, it is not done willingly and designedly. And I shall be ready to be better informed.

Let us now apply this scheme to the text: or see, how it is explained by the favourers of this sentiment. And I hope to have here again the assistance of the same learned divine and commentator, who has been quoted already several times.

Ver. 5, 6. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form 'of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Ye ought to be of such a kind and 'beneficent, of such a humble and condescending disposition, as Christ Jesus himself was: who 'being in the form or likeness of God, was not eager in retaining that likeness to God.'

The "form of God" is farther explained in this manner, p. 26. He was in the form or 'likeness of God, upon account of that authority, dominion, and power, with which he was in-'trusted, and which he exercised antecedently to his coming into the world.—Our Saviour ante-'cedently to his incarnation, having the Jews committed to him of God, and being prince of that 'people, or the King of Israel, was in the form and likeness of God.

'Who being in the form or likeness of God, was not eager in retaining that likeness to God; 'but on the contrary he emptied himself of that form of God, taking upon him a very different 'form or likeness, even that of a servant, when he was made in the likeness of men.'

And for explaining this last particular it is added by the same interpreter in his notes: 'If 'it be here inquired, why does St. Paul say, "he was in the likeness of men?" Was he not 'truly and properly a man? The answer is easy, that "men" signifies such animated bodies as 'ours are, inhabited each by a rational soul. And so, as to his body, he was in all respects a 'man, just as we are, he having taken part with us in flesh and blood, and having a body prepared 'for him. The "likeness" therefore belongs not to that, but to the other part of man, the το 'ηγεμονικον, the rational spirit: wherein he was vastly more than man, the Word, or Logos, that 'was in the form of God, being so transcendently superior to the most noble soul that ever inha-'bited any other human flesh.

'"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, 'even the death of the cross." And though his becoming man was a great instance of humility 'and condescension, yet he did not stop at that: but when he was [actually] in the same con-'dition and state with men, he humbled himself yet farther by becoming obedient to God unto 'death, and that too the death of the cross, which was attended with the greatest reproach as 'well as torment.'

Ver. 9, 10, 11. '"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which 'is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and 'things on earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus 'Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." And upon this account God has advanced 'him higher than before, and freely bestowed on him an authority that is superior to what he 'ever granted to any other: that by virtue of the authority of Jesus all should be constrained to 'submit to God: whether they are heavenly or earthly [beings], or such as are under the earth:

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'and that every tongue should acknowledge that Jesus Christ is, by this gift of God, Lord of all, 'to the glory of God the Father.'

This exaltation, or superior exaltation of Christ above what he had before, is illustrated by the same learned expositor in his notes after this manner: 'When our Lord came into the world, 'he laid aside that form of God he was in before, and was made for a little time, that is, till his 'resurrection, lower than the angels, they still continuing their dominion, while he parted with 'his. At our Lord's resurrection an entire change was made in this state of things, and an end 'was put to this rule of angels: they themselves, together with all nations, were put under one 'head, even Christ, whose authority and power was then so highly advanced above what it was 'before; he being intrusted with an universal dominion, and all that were rulers and governors 'before being made his subjects and ministers.'

I have been the longer in representing this scheme, that I might shew it to as much advantage as possible. And now I shall propose some objections to it.

One observation, which I mention in the first place, relates to a particular article in this scheme.

It is not reasonable that the Word, the Son of God, the first derived being who had been employed under God the Father in making all things, should, some time after the world was made, have so limited dominion and authority, as to be the president and governor of the Jewish people only: whilst other angels had like power and dominion over other people and countries.

What reason can be assigned, why the being, who under God the Father had been creator of all things, visible and invisible, should be put quite, or well nigh, upon a level with his creatures? There is no ground, from reason or scripture, to believe any voluntary or imposed humiliation of the Son of God before his incarnation.

I might likewise ask what reason can be assigned, why any good angels should, after our Lord's resurrection and ascension, be deprived of any advantages which they before enjoyed? For it may be well supposed, that if they were acquainted with our Lord's transactions here on earth, by the will of the Father, for the good of mankind, they approved, admired, and applauded them. And some of the angels may have been, yea, were employed in attending upon, and ministering to Jesus, whilst he dwelt on this earth.

However this may be reckoned by some to be an exception only to the scheme of the learned commentator before cited: I therefore place these observations here by themselves.

But for the present, setting that aside, all, I think, who are in this scheme, that the Word, the Son of God, is a distinct being, inferior to God the Father, suppose, that he was employed under God the Father, in creating the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein: that afterwards he was incarnate, humbled himself, suffered and died, and was exalted.

Against this scheme then, as distinguished from the foregoing particular (though that has been introduced as a plausible supposition) I object as follows.

1. The Lord Jesus, in the New Testament, is often spoken of as "a man;" which means a being with a reasonable soul and human body. But, if the Word, a transcendently great and excellent spirit, far superior to human souls, animated the body of Jesus, as a soul, then our Lord was not, properly speaking, a man: though this be often said in scripture, and spoken of as a thing of importance. I do not now alledge any texts by way of proof. There may be occasion to produce them distinctly in another place.

2. It appears to be an impropriety, and incongruity, that any spirit, except a human soul, should animate a human body. It would, I apprehend, be an incongruity not parallelled in any of the works of God, of which we have any knowledge.

3. Jesus Christ, as we evidently know from his history in the gospels, had all the innocent, sinless infirmities of the human nature. He was weary with journeyings, he hungred, and had thirst, he needed the refreshment of food, and of rest, or sleep: and he endured pain, and at some times piercing affliction and grief, and at last died.

But this could not have been, supposing the body of Jesus to have been animated by so transcendently powerful and active a spirit as the Word, or the Son of God, in this scheme is supposed to be. He could not have been diminished or weakened thereby. Supposing such an union of so great a spirit with a human body, it would swallow it up. I mean, that spirit would not be straitened and confined, or diminished by the body, but would infuse vigour and activity into the body: so that it would be no longer liable to the weaknesses to which human bodies actuated

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only by human souls, are incident. How can a spirit, creator of all things under God the Father, be straitened and incommoded by so small a portion of matter, which was originally created by him? Will the residence of so great a spirit in a human body make no alteration? Shall that body be still as feeble, as liable to wants, and as sensible to pain, as an ordinary body, which has only a human soul?

4. We do not perceive the Lord Jesus to insist upon his pre-existent greatness and glory, as an argument of obedience to his doctrine. He does not represent himself to those who were his hearers, as their creator under God. But he says, that "the Father had sent him," that he acted by commission under God, and that the Father had sealed him, by the miraculous works which he had enabled him to do, and that he had authority from him to do and teach as he did.

5. If so glorious a being as the Word, or Son of God, is represented to be in this scheme, had taken upon himself a human body, and submitted to animate and act in it as a soul: that condescension would have been clearly and frequently shewn, and insisted on in the gospels and epistles. It would have been as much enlarged upon as our Lord's resurrection and ascension: but there are no clear texts asserting this: none but what are capable of another sense, and are better interpreted in a different manner.

6. In this way Jesus Christ is no example of imitation to us: for no such thing, as the condescension just represented, is required of us. We are not taught to be willing to descend into some inferior species of beings, and therein to be debilitated and incommoded, and lose all our rationality, for a while at least. But what we are taught is, that we should act modestly and meekly in the condition assigned us, and in which God has made us.

7. If the body of Jesus had been animated by so great a spirit as its soul, there would have been nothing at all extraordinary in his resurrection and ascension. And yet how does the apostle labour in describing this great instance of divine power? Eph. i. 19, 20. "That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power: which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." But what is there extraordinary in it, that a being who under God had made the world, should be raised up, and ascend, and be seated in the heavenly places, where he had been long before?

8. Once more: this doctrine of the transcendent glory and power of Christ before his coming into the world, is inconsistent with the representations given throughout scripture of his exaltation after his death, as a reward of his humility and obedience upon earth. For the text, agreeably to many others, says: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." But there is no exaltation, to which any being can be advanced, that would exceed what the Creator was entitled to, as such. Has he not, as Creator, under God, of all things visible and invisible, a natural right to dominion and authority over them, and to precedence before and above all others? How then could dominion and authority over all things be the reward of Christ's humility and patience, and other virtues here on earth?

What adds weight to this consideration is, that this doctrine weakens, and even destroys the argument set before us to humility and meekness, which is taken from the exaltation of Jesus. For according to it, he has no advancement, and indeed could have no advancement, after all he had done here, but what he was entitled to without it.

I must not stay to state and answer objections. But there is one text, so likely to occur to the thoughts of many, that it may be best to take notice of it. It is in the prayer recorded John xvii. where at ver. 5. is this petition of our Lord. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glorify, which I had with thee before the world was." If any should urge this text, as an objection against some things just said, I would answer: the most likely meaning of these words is to this purpose. Our Lord was here approaching to the affecting scene of his last sufferings, and the conclusion of his life here on earth, in which he had acted with great zeal and faithfulness for the glory of God, and the good of men. And having so fulfilled the commission given him, he solemnly and humbly addresses God, saying, "I have glorified thee on earth. I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was:" that is, which had been always, and from the beginning designed for me. So Rev. xiii. 8. "The lamb slain," that is designed to be slain, "before the foundation of the world." Eph. i. 4. "According as he has chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world." Col. iii. 3. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." See

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also Eph. iii. 9, and Matt. xxv. 34; and other like places. So the glory, which was to be the reward of what Jesus should do on earth, was always with God. It was "with him," in his purpose: "hid with him, before the world was." To the like effect St. Augustin[a] very largely. And if there is any reward annexed to our Lord's services and sufferings here on earth, (as certainly there is) very probably that is what is here intended.

These things I have now proposed to your consideration. I do not dictate. But let it be considered, whether this scheme be not attended with difficulties. Many pious and learned men may have taken it up, for avoiding difficulties in the commonly received doctrine. Nevertheless this also may be found to have difficulties that must weaken the persuasion of its truth and probability.

God willing, I intend to represent another opinion hereafter. For the present I shall conclude with the following remarks.

We may hence receive instruction. We should not be too much opinionated of ourselves, because we know more truths than others. Let us rather suppose that we may be mistaken; sensible, that in many points of speculation there are difficulties which may be overlooked by us; and that our scheme may be liable to objections which we have not observed. Neither all wisdom, nor all truth is monopolized by any one man, or sect of men. He who has gained truth fairly, by impartial and laborious examination and inquiry, will be under little temptation to insult or despise others whom he thinks to be in error or ignorance, if they be but open to conviction. He knows that things appear in different lights to different persons, and to the same person at different times. He has, perhaps, been positive in some points, which he has afterwards seen to be mistaken opinions; though he was all the while sincere. He must therefore allow the innocence of error in some cases. Let us not be too desirous that others should agree with us in opinion. Let us love and honour them, if they are honest and virtuous; which many may be, who are not of the same sentiment with us, and see not things in the same light that we do. If we desire to experience moderation from others, let us show it ourselves, as there is occasion. Let not our faith, our knowledge, or opinion of it, produce arrogance and censoriousness. But as St. James directs; if we are wise men, and endued with knowledge, let us show out of a good conversation our works with meekness of wisdom, Jam. iii. 13. Or, let us show our wisdom by a truly pious and virtuous conversation, and by meekness of behaviour towards others.

DISCOURSE III.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Philip. ii. 5—11. And what follows.

I HAVE proposed to explain this text largely and distinctly. And though this design may lead me to be somewhat controversial, and to treat some points, which are, and long have been disputed among Christians; I have hoped that I should have no reason to decline freedom and plainness of expression. It is very common for men in public, as well as private discourses, to assert their own sentiment, and to refute, or do what lies in their power, to refute the schemes and sentiments of others. Nor is it uncommon for men of low rank and condition, to think themselves capable judges of what are reckoned the most sublime and mysterious doctrines, and to pass sentences, not very favourable, upon those who are of a different opinion from themselves. There cannot be then, I apprehend, any sufficient reason to condemn an attempt to represent in a fair and impartial manner divers sentiments concerning the Deity, and the person of Christ, together with the reasons and arguments by which they are supported.

[a] Cum ergo videret illius prædestinatæ suæ clarificationis venisse jam tempus, ut et nunc fieret in redditione, quod fuerat in prædestinatione jam factum, oravit, dicens: "Et nunc clarifica me tu Pater apud teipsum claritate, quam habui priusquam mundus esset, apud te: tanquam diceret, claritatem quam habui apud te, id est; illam claritatem, quam habui apud te in prædestinatione tua, tempus est, ut apud te habeam etiam vivens in dextera tua. In Joan. Evang. cap. xvii. tract. 105, p. 8, tom. III. Bened. p. 2.

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I have already considered two schemes, concerning the Deity, and a Trinity, and the person of Christ: one, that which is reckoned the commonly received opinion, or orthodox: the other sometimes called Arianism. The third, to be now considered, is sometimes called the doctrine of the Unitarians or the Nazareans. These believe that there is one God alone, even the Father, eternal, almighty, possessed of all perfections, without any defects, or limits, unchangeable, the creator of all things visible and invisible, the supreme Lord and Governor of the world, whose providential care upholds all things, who spoke to the patriarchs in the early ages of the world, to the people of Israel by Moses, and other prophets, and in these latter ages of the world to all mankind by Jesus Christ, and by him will distribute equal recompenses to all according to their behaviour in this world.

For farther illustrating this point, it will be proper to show more distinctly the opinion of those persons concerning God the Father, or the Divine Unity, the person of Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

First, Concerning God the Father, or the Divine Unity; which appears to be the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, from the beginning to the end.

Moses, the Jewish lawgiver, and their greatest prophet, before the gospel dispensation, begins his five books with an account of the creation of the world.

The first of the ten commandments, delivered with so great solemnity to the Jewish people, soon after their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and before they were put into possession of Canaan, as a distinct and independent nation and people, is, "I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me," Exod. xx. 1, 2; that is, before my face, in my sight, to which all things are open, from whom no deviation from this law can be hid, and will be overlooked and unresented. In the fourth of those ten laws or commandments it is said, "Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy——For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day," ver. 10, 11.

After the rehearsal of those commandments, and other things in the book of Deuteronomy, it is said, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," Deut. vi. 4.

Ps. lxxxiii. 18. "That men may know, that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most high over all the earth."

Is. xl. 28. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, nor is weary?"

Is. xliv. 6. "Thus saith the Lord, the king of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last——And beside me there is no God." Ver. 8. "Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God. I know not any." Ver. 24. "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb: I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself."

Such, then, is the doctrine of the Old Testament. There is one God, even Jehovah, eternal, unchangeable, the creator of the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, the Lord, God, and King of Israel.

Let us now observe the doctrine of the New Testament, which, if from heaven, cannot be different, but must be harmonious with that of the Old.

Matt. iv. 9, 10. When Satan tempted our Lord, and said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Jesus said unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." See Deut. vi. 13, and x. 20.

Mark xii. 28—34. "And one of the scribes came,——and asked him, which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him: The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment——And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but he——And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." See Deut. vi. 4, 5.

Luke xviii. 18, 19. "And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good, save one, that is God."

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John xvii. 1—3. "These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Our Lord therefore, we see, prays to God, even the Father, his Father, and our Father, his God, and our God." John xx. 17. And gives to him the character of "the only true God."

It might be here not improperly observed farther, that God, even the Father, is he, in whose name, and by whose authority our Lord professed to act, whose will he did, to whom he resigned himself, whose glory ultimately, and above all things, he sought, and not his own.

John v. 30. "I can of my ownself do nothing. "As I hear I judge. And my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which sent me." Ver. 36. "But I have greater witness than that of John. For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Ver. 43. "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not."

John vii. 16. "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." John xii. 49. "For I have not spoken of myself. But the Father which sent me, he gave me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."

The apostles of Christ were unanimous, and after their Lord's resurrection and ascension to heaven, pray, and preach as he had done.

Acts iii. 12, 13. After the healing of the lame man that sat at the gate of the temple, the people ran together to Peter and John. "When Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this?——The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up." It is the God of the patriarchs and prophets, in whose name they act, by whom, they supposed, their miracles were wrought, for confirming the authority and doctrine of Jesus.

Afterwards, when delivered from a great danger, Acts iv. 23—30. "And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voices to God, and said, Lord, thou art God who hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that is therein——And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thy hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child," servant, "Jesus." And ch. v. 29—31, before the whole Jewish council: "Then Peter and the other apostles answered, and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

Thus they ascribe the gospel dispensation to the one God, creator of heaven and earth, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of the people of Israel.

To the same God the apostles offer up prayers and praises in their epistles.

Says St. Paul, Eph. iii. 14. "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ——And St. Peter, 1 Ep. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"——Eph. v. 20. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God, even the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In many other places of their epistles the apostles expressly teach, that there is but one God, even the Father.

1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6. "We know that an idol is nothing, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be, that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many) yet to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, [by whom are all things,] and we by him."

2 Cor. xi. 31. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: or God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not."

1 Tim. i. 17. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever."

1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. "Which in his time he shall shew, who is the blessed and only poten-

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tate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality——To whom be honour and power everlasting."

Jude v. 25. "To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever."

Eph. iv. 5, 6. "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

And in this second chapter of the epistle to the Philippians we are assured, that our Lord has been exalted, "that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

From all which it is concluded, that there is one God, even the Father.

In the next place we are to observe, what is the sentiment of these persons concerning our blessed Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And, in short, their sentiment is, that he is a man, with a reasonable soul and human body, especially favoured of God.

Of which there are these proofs. He was born of a woman.

We have an account of our Lord's nativity in two evangelists, both agreeing, that he was born of a virgin, and "conceived by the Holy Ghost," as it is expressed in the apostle's creed, Matt. i. 18—25. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise. When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost,—Joseph, her husband, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, in a dream, saying: Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife. For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son. And thou shalt call his name Jesus——Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him; and took unto him his wife. And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son. And he called his name Jesus."

St. Luke i. 26—38. "The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary——And the angel said unto her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David." Must not this be reckoned full proof, that Jesus was a man, and that it was designed to represent him to us as such? Not made as Adam, but born of a woman; not in the ordinary way of generation, but of a virgin, by the immediate operation and miraculous power of God. See Luke i. 35.

Nor may it be amiss to observe here, that in the forecited evangelists are two pedigrees of Jesus: one carrying his genealogy up to David, and Abraham, the other as high as to Adam; to satisfy us of his humanity, and to show the fulfilment of the divine promises concerning the great person who was to come, and that Jesus was "the seed of the woman," who should bruise the serpent's head: "the seed of Abraham," in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, and the "son of David," in whom the everlasting kingdom, promised to that patriarch, should be established.

Jesus likewise, being a man, experienced many dangers in the time of his infancy. Notwithstanding which his life was wonderfully preserved. Being returned safe from Egypt, Joseph and Mary settled again in Galilee, in their own city Nazareth. And it is observed by St. Luke ii. 40. "And[a] the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." The same evangelist also having given an account of his going with his parents to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover, when he was twelve years of age, adds: ch. ii. 51, 52. "That he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them——And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

It might be observed, that when our Lord appeared publicly in the world, and by his words and works showed himself to be the Messiah, he called himself "the son of man:" and they who believed in him, respectfully addressed to him in the character of "the son of David."

[a] Το δε παιδιον ηυξανε.

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Through the whole course of his ministry we perceive him to have had all the innocent infirmities of human nature. In the end he died, and was raised from the dead, in testimony to the truth of the important doctrine taught by him, and as a pattern of that resurrection, of which he assured his faithful followers.

St. Peter preaching to the Jews at Jerusalem, soon after our Lord's resurrection and ascension, says, Acts ii. 22. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know—him God hath raised up."

St. Paul preaching at Athens says, Acts xvii. 31. "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."

Gal. iv. 4. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

1 Tim. ii. 5. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

2 Tim. ii. 8. "Remember, that Jesus Christ of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel."

The apostle to the Hebrews (a great part of whose design in that epistle is to represent the great dignity of Jesus above Moses, and as exalted highly after his resurrection, and ascension to heaven) does as clearly and fully assert the human nature of Jesus, as any writer of the New Testament.

The argument in Heb. ii. 14—18, must be understood to imply true and perfect humanity, of soul as well as body. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels. But he took on him the seed of Abraham." The meaning is, for he is not the deliverer of angels, but of the seed of Abraham. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath been tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted:" or in ch. iv. 15. "For we have not an high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin." In order to be tempted like as we are, he must have been like us, having a reasonable [human] soul and [human] body.

The apostle likewise in the former part of that second chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews goes upon the supposition of the Lord Jesus being a man, ver. 5—9. "For unto the angels has he not put in subjection the world to come, of which we speak: but one in a certain place," meaning Ps. viii. "testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels: thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet——But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man, crowned with glory and honour for the suffering of death."

Well then, they of this scheme, from these and other texts conclude[a] Jesus to be a man,

[a] 'Christ is called the son of man, not to deny his godhead, but to express the verity of his human nature, and that he was of our stock and lineage. He might have been true man, though he had not come of Adam, but his human nature had been framed out of the dust of the ground, as Adam's was, or created out of nothing. "But he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are of one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," Heb. ii. 11. 'He would be of the mass and stock with us.' Dr. Thomas Manton upon Luke xix. 1. Vol. IV. p. 883.

'They are said to be of one. This denotes the union that is between them. They are of one stock and lineage, or one common parent of mankind. Hence Luke carrieth up the genealogy of Christ unto Adam. Luke ii. 38; so that he is of our kind and nature.' Manton upon Heb. ii. 11. p. 1083.

Afterwards, 'Christ is our kinsman: not only true man, but the son of man. True man he might have been, if God had created him out of nothing, or he had brought his substance from heaven. But he is the son of man, one descended from the loins of Adam, as we are. And so does redeem us, not only jure proprietatis, by virtue of his interest in us, as our Creator; but jure propinquitatis, by virtue of kindred, as one of our stock and lineage: as the son of man, as well as the son of God. For Jesus Christ, of all the kindred, was the only one that was free, and able to pay a ransom for us.' As before, p. 1084.

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with a reasonable human soul, and human body, born of the virgin Mary, by the especial interposition of God himself. Which leads us to the other thing, that God was with him.

That special favour and privilege is variously expressed. In the discourse of Peter at the house of Cornelius, before referred to. Acts x. 36—38. "That word which God sent unto the children of Israel,——which was published throughout Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism, which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were possessed of the devil. For God was with him."

John the baptist, near the conclusion of his ministry, bears this testimony to Jesus. "He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him," John iii. 34.

Matt. i. 22, 23. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, A virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us."

Col. ii. 9. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," or really.

Which is much the same with what is observed by the evangelist John i. 14. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelled among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

And all these expressions in the New Testament are agreeable to the descriptions of the Messiah in ancient prophesy. So Is. xi. 1, 2. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord."

Which is the very same with what John Baptist calls "giving the Spirit without measure," John iii. 34, and the same with "the Spirit's abiding on him, and remaining on him," see John i. 32, 33.

For clearing up this matter, it should be observed, that they who are of this opinion do not understand by the Son of God an intelligent spirit, equal with God the Father, and of the same substance and power, nor an angelical, or superangelical spirit, formed before the creation of this material and visible world. But, in their apprehension, it is the man Jesus, who *is the* Son of God. And the Son of God, by way of eminence and distinction, or the well-beloved Son of God, and only begotten Son of God, as they suppose, are all terms of equivalent import and meaning, denoting the Messiah.

When there came a voice from heaven, or from the most glorious Majesty, or the presence of God, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. "Hear ye him:" they think this to be the same, as a solemn declaration, that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world, who knew, and was to reveal the will of God to others, in a more perfect manner than any of the prophets had done.

The Son of God, or the only-begotten Son of God, is the man most dear to God. He is the Christ. And the Christ, and the Son of God, are the same.

When God sent Moses back to Egypt, from whence he had fled, he was charged with this commission. Exod. iv. 22, 23. "Thus shalt thou say unto Pharaoh: thus saith the Lord: Israel is my son, even my first-born. And I say unto thee: Let my son go, that he may serve me." The children of Israel were God's chosen people, dear to him, and his special care, above all people of the earth. Israel therefore is called his son. We see a like style in some other texts. Jer. xxxi. 9. "For I am a father unto Israel. And Ephraim is my first-born." Hos. xi. 1. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

And Christians, who believe in Jesus, and through him, are brought nigh to God, are God's children and sons: John i. 12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." 1 John iii. 1. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Gal. iii. 26. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." But Jesus "is the Son of God," by way of eminence. He is "the first-born among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29.

How Jesus is the Son of God, has been shewn formerly.* I rehearse here briefly only. He

* See Pages 197 and 200.

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is the Son of God, as he was born of a virgin, by the immediate and extraordinary interposition of the divine power. He is the Son of God, as he had the Spirit without measure, and the Father's fulness was poured out upon him; or the Deity dwelled in him. And he was afterwards declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead on the third day. He is the first-begotten from the dead, who died and rose again, and dies no more, but lives for ever. And he is exalted to God's right hand, being invested with authority and dominion over all flesh, and constituted judge of the world, by whom God will pass sentence upon all mankind. In these respects, as well as others, he has the pre-eminence. See Col. i. 15—19.

It may be here inquired, if Jesus were a man, with a human soul and body, how could he know all things? And how could he work so many miracles? The answer is to this purpose: "God was with him." And the Father, in him, did the works. The disciples, as is allowed, during the whole time of our Lord's abode with them here on earth, conceived of him no otherwise, than as a man, or the great prophet that was to come into the world, the Christ, who had the words of eternal life, or made the fullest revelation of the divine mind. They believed him to be a man, and yet they were persuaded, that "he knew what was in man." Yea, our Lord himself, after he had given sufficient proofs that he was the promised Messiah, expected, and judged it reasonable that every pious and understanding Jew should believe him able to perform miraculous works, upon persons at a distance, without his going to them. See John iv. 46—50. And some had that faith: though, undoubtedly, they esteemed him to be only a prophet, or a man highly favoured of God.

And though there are none of the prophets, not Moses himself, upon whom the Spirit of God did abide, as upon Jesus the Messiah; yet there are divers things in the Old Testament, that might assist pious and attentive Jews, in our Lord's time, in forming just conceptions concerning the knowledge as well as the power of the Messiah.

The prophet Elisha could tell the king of Israel exactly the designs and counsels of the king of Syria. See 2 Kings vi. 8—12, and 2 Kings v. 25, 26. When Elisha asked Gehazi, "Whence comest thou? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. Elisha said unto him, Went not my spirit with thee, when the man turned again with his chariot to meet thee?" He had seen and heard all that transaction, as if he had been present.

It was indeed a wonderful knowledge that was given that prophet. But it may be perceived, that by divine communication he might have known much more.

In like manner, in the perfectly innocent and capacious mind of the blessed Jesus, who had "the Spirit without measure," it is easy to suppose that there was, and must have been an extensive and intimate knowledge of things distant and secret.

And some of Elisha's miracles were wrought at a distance. He did not see Naaman, whose leprosy was cured at his word, or by his direction. 2 Kings v. 9—12. Nor was he present with the widow when her oil was multiplied. 2 Kings iv. 4—7.

To proceed. By "the Spirit," or "Holy Ghost," the persons in this way of thinking do not understand a distinct intelligent agent, or being of great power and capacity. But with them the Spirit of God is God himself, or the power of God, or a gift, or divine influence and manifestation.

Ps. xxxiii. 6. "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth, or the spirit of his mouth. The word of the Lord and the breath of his mouth are one and the same. All things came into being and were disposed of by his will, at his word and command.

In like manner, Job xxvii. 13. "By his Spirit he has garnished the heavens. His hand has formed the crooked serpent:" or the winding constellation in the heavens, which we call the milky way. The spirit or the hand of God formed all those things.

Luke xi. 20. "If I by the finger of God cast out dæmons, no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you." In Matt. xii. 28. "But if I cast out dæmons by the spirit of God, then is the kingdom of God come unto you. So the finger of God, or the spirit of God, is the power of God, or God himself." As St. Peter says, Acts ii. 22. "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved among you by miracles——which God did by him, in the midst of you."

So in other places likewise the spirit of God is the same as God: as the spirit of a man is the man himself. 1 Cor. ii. 11. "What man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of man,

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which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God." Gal. vi. 18, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit," that is, with you: as at the conclusion of several other epistles, particularly 1 Cor. xvi. 23. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."

In the Acts of the apostles the spirit often denotes a gift, or power. Acts ii. 38. "Repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. *την δωρεαν τυ αγιυ πνευματος.* Acts viii. 20. Simon of Samaria "thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money." *την δωρεαν τυ θευ.* Acts x. 45. "on the gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." *η δωρεα τυ αγιυ πνευματος.*

Timothy is directed 1 Tim. iv. 14, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy." *Μη αμελει τυ εν σοι χαρισματος*——2 Tim. i. 6. "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee." *αναζωπυρειν το χαρισμα τυ θευ.*

When God said to Moses, Numb. xi. 16, 17. "That he should go and gather unto him seventy men of the elders of Israel, and," says he, "I will take of the spirit that is in thee, and will put it upon them." No one understands thereby, that God intended to take from Moses a portion of a spiritual being resting upon him: but that he would bestow upon those elders qualifications of wisdom and understanding, resembling those in Moses, by which he was so eminent and distinguished. So Deut. xxiv. 9. "Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom. For Moses had laid his hands upon him."

Zach. xii. 10. "And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication: not pour out upon them a great and transcendent being or spirit: but give them the temper, the qualification, the disposition of grace and supplication.

And it is generally supposed, that the ancient Jewish people never had any notion of the distinct personality of the Spirit, "or the Spirit of God," or "the Spirit of the Lord," though such phrases occur very frequently in the scriptures of the Old Testament. But they understood these expressions after the manner just shown.

And it is observable, that in the New Testament, though there are many doxologies, or ascriptions of glory to God, and to Christ, there is not one to the Spirit. Nor is there at the beginning of the epistles any wish of peace from the Spirit distinctly, but only from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord says Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go ye therefore, and teach" or disciple "all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." These persons think it not likely, that our Lord should insert in a baptismal form a sublime mysterious doctrine, not clearly taught any where else. The genuine meaning they suppose to be, that[a] men should be baptized into the profession of the belief, and an obligation of obedience to the doctrine taught by Christ, with authority from God the Father, confirmed by the Holy Ghost: by the Holy Ghost understanding the miracles of our Saviour's own ministry, and of his apostles, and the spiritual gifts bestowed upon the apostles, and other believers, after our Lord's resurrection, and all the wonderful attestations to the truth and divine original of the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ. In a word, men were to be baptized into a profession of the Christian religion, and an obligation to act according to it.

And that this is the meaning of this direction of our Lord, may be inferred from the Acts of the Apostles, where this form, in these very words, never appears. But men are required to "be baptized in the name of Christ," or are said to "have been baptized into Christ:" that is, as before observed, they made a profession of faith in Jesus, or owned their obligation to obey him in being baptized. Acts ii. 38. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Ch. viii. 16. "Only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." See ch. viii. 35—38. Rom. vi. 3. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" Gal. iii. 27. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

[a] Dr. S. Clarke's paraphrase is this:—'baptizing them 'with water, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, 'and of the Holy Ghost:" that is, receiving them to a profession of the belief, and an obligation to the practice of that 'religion, which God the Father has revealed and taught by 'the Son, and confirmed and established by the Holy Ghost.'

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Of those who are in this scheme it is to be observed, finally, that they admit not any real Trinity, or Trinity of Divine Persons, either equal or subordinate. But to them there is one God, even the Father, and one Lord, even Jesus Christ; who had, when on earth, the spirit without measure, and also poured out of the spirit, or spiritual and miraculous gifts in abundance upon his apostles, and other his followers, and is exalted to dominion and power over all things, to the glory of God, and for the good of the church.

This is, in brief, that scheme which is called Unitarian. I should now apply it to the text before us. But that must be deferred to another opportunity. I shall now mention only an observation or two, partly doctrinal, partly practical.

1. The scheme now represented, seems to be the plainest and most simple scheme of all. And it is generally allowed to have been the belief of the Nazarean Christians, or Jewish believers.

But whatever may be the simplicity of this scheme, even they who have seemed to receive it, in the main, have corrupted it, and suffered themselves to be entangled in philosophical schemes and speculations, about the pre-existence of the soul of Christ and other matters.

Indeed the Christian religion has in it great simplicity, both as to doctrines and positive institutions. But men have not delighted to retain the simplicity of either.

Whatever speculative scheme of doctrine we receive as true, we are to see that we do not too much rely upon our sound faith, or right sentiment, but proceed to, and chiefly charge ourselves with, a suitable practice. James ii. 19. "Thou believest that there is one God. Thou dost well. The dæmons believe and tremble." James writes especially to Jewish, not Gentile believers. And it is likely that they, as well as other Jews at that time, prided themselves in their orthodoxy, or right of faith, concerning the Deity. The Divine Unity was with them a favourite article. He therefore singles out that, and tells them, that they might hold that right faith, and yet be never the better for it. If they should rely upon that faith without good works, that very faith would prove an aggravation of their misery.

Truth in things of religion is not a matter of indifference. Every virtuous mind must be desirous to know it. But no speculative belief, without practice, is saving, or will give a man real worth and excellence. The knowledge that puffeth up is vain and insignificant. To knowledge there should be added humility, gratitude to God, who has afforded us means and opportunities of knowledge: a modest sense of our remaining ignorance and imperfection: a diffidence and apprehensiveness, that though we see some things with great evidence, and are firmly persuaded of their truth, nevertheless many of our judgments of things may be false and erroneous.

We should likewise be cautious of judging others. Some who have less knowledge, may have more virtue. God alone knows the hearts of men, and all their circumstances; and is therefore the only judge what errors are criminal, and how far men fall short of improving the advantages afforded them, or act up to the light that has been given them.

Let us then inquire with care and impartiality. Let us profess the truth so far as we are acquainted with it, and candidly recommend it to others, with mildness, patience, and long-suffering: and in all things act sincerely according to the light we have: that none of us may fail of that full reward, which God, the best of beings, offers to us, and invites us to contend for, and accept: and will through Jesus Christ certainly bestow upon all, who diligently improve the privileges, which they have been favoured with in their state of trial.

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DISCOURSE IV.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.—Philip. ii. 5—9. And what follows.

I HAVE proposed to consider this text distinctly. In so doing I have represented the different opinions of Christians concerning the Deity, and the person of Jesus Christ.

The opinion last represented was that called Unitarian and Nazarean. I am now to apply that doctrine to this text, or interpret this text, according to the sentiments of those who believe Jesus to be a man, with a human soul, and human body: but "a man with whom God was," in a most peculiar and extraordinary manner.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God."

They who are in the scheme, which we are now explaining, suppose, that here in this world, Jesus was in the form of God. What the apostle intends thereby is the wonderful knowledge which the Lord Jesus showed, even of things at a distance, things past, and the thoughts and reasonings and surmises of men: of all which we have in the gospels a most beautiful and affecting history.[a] When at his word and command, the most infirm and diseased persons were immediately healed: when those who had the palsy, or the dropsy, or were lunatic, were healed of their diseases: when the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the deaf were made to hear, and the dumb to speak: when he took upon him some special appearance of authority, and to such as had the leprosy, and petitioned for a cure he said: "I will, Be thou clean." When he fed and refreshed several thousands at once in desert places: when he directed Peter to cast a hook into the sea, assuring of a supply for himself and him of the tribute money for the temple: when he raised the dead, and walked on the sea, and with a word composed the winds and the waves: when he conveyed to his disciples, upon his sending them from him, spiritual gifts, so far as was requisite at that season. And though that was not yet accomplished, it was plainly declared, by his forerunner, that this was he who should baptize men with the Holy Ghost: or bestow on a sudden, in a plentiful measure, wisdom and understanding, and miraculous powers upon his followers in general, according to their several stations.

This may be well meant by "the form of God." These things explain the apostle's expression in the text. And this wonderful power and knowledge seem to be what the same apostle means when he says that Christ was rich, in 2 Cor. viii. 9. Which place may be reckoned parallel with that which we are now considering. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye by his poverty might be rich."

"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," that is, did not earnestly covet divine honour from men, or seek to be equal, or like to God: "but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being in the likeness of ordinary men." That is, very probably, the apostle's design. There begins the account of Christ's condescending and self-denying conduct. Whatever[b] scheme men embrace concerning the Deity, and the person of Christ, I think they must allow of this interpretation: either that Jesus did not make a show of his divinity, but veiled it, and hid it: or that he did not earnestly seek to be, or appear equal or like to God.

By not earnestly coveting divine honour, or seeking to be equal or like to God, St. Paul may refer to and intend many things in the course of our Lord's ministry, which are recorded in the gospels. Our Lord did not act as if he was independent. He declared that he came from God, and that the Father had sent him. He professed to teach and act as he had received from the Father. When some would have persuaded him to assume kingly power and authority: not doubting but he was able to set up a government, to which all might be compelled to submit:

[a] Μορφη in nostris libris non significat internum & occultum aliquid, sed id quod in oculos incurrit, qualis erat eximia in Christo potestas sanandi morbos omnes, ejiciendi dæmonas, excitandi mortuos, mutandi rerum naturas.
Grot. ad Philip. Cap. ii. v. 6.

[b] See Vol. i p. 572, and Vol. ii. p. 21.

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he absolutely declined the proposal. He first defeated the measures which they had taken to bring him into their design. And afterwards he sharply reproved that worldly-mindedness by which they had been actuated.

For a like reason he enjoined silence upon some, on whom he had wrought great cures.

Mark x. 17, 18. "When he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him: Good Master, what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him: Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one. That is God." The outward respect shewn by that person being so extraordinary, both as to action and expression, he could not accept it, without an intimation of the supreme respect due to God alone.

John v. 30. "I can of myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge. And my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me."

John x. 30—38. "Our Lord having in some strong expressions represented the high authority given to him, the "Jews took up stones to stone him. And said: For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that thou being a man, makest thyself God." Whereupon our Lord modestly answers, agreeably to what he had before said: that the near relation to God, spoken of by him, was claimed on no other account, than the high honour which God had conferred upon him, and which they might discern from the works which they had seen him do. "If ye called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world: Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works."

And many other particulars must occur to the thoughts of all. Wherein our Lord did not choose his own will, nor affect independence, but referred all to God the Father.

"But made himself of no reputation." Literally, according to the original, emptied himself. That is, he did not exert the divine power residing in him, for securing to himself plentiful accommodations, honourable respects, and humble lowly obeisance: but he lived in mean circumstances, and was exposed to the remarks, reproaches, and ill-usage of many.

"And took upon him the form of a servant." But, according to the original, it is more literally "taking the form of a servant. He emptied himself," or "made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant." This farther illustrates the foregoing particular. Jesus did not place himself in servitude to any. But, as he says to the disciples: "Whether is greater, He that sitteth at meat? or he that serveth? But I am among you, as one that serveth," Luke xxii. 17. Instead of assuming state and grandeur, or a continued appearance of greatness, he was like a man of mean condition. He conversed freely with all sorts of men, and admitted all to free access: and allowed of questions and cavils. Himself went about doing good, travelling over the cities and villages of the land of Israel, teaching the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven: not inviting men by the pomp of numerous attendance, or by gifts, or promises of worldly advantages: but receiving usually needful supplies for himself and his disciples from a few grateful followers who ministered to him of their substance.

In the whole of his ministry he usually acted as one that serves. But there were some remarkable instances of humility and condescension, particularly when he washed the disciples' feet, and gave them the refreshment, ordinarily received from servants only.

Some think, that when our Lord emptied himself, or made himself of no reputation, he was no longer in the form of God. But it seems to me, that he was at the same time in the form of God, and in the form of a servant. He had the form of God in this world, as he wrought miracles of all kinds, whenever he pleased, and likewise had all knowledge of all things. At the same time he acted very humbly and meekly, and was destitute of external pomp and grandeur.

And I think our Lord's discourse with his disciples presently after the forementioned remarkable condescension, shows, that the form of God, and the form of a servant were united. John xiii. 12—14. "So then after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them: Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord. And so I am. If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." He was their Lord and Master at the same time that he acted in divers respects as one that serves.

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A nobleman, or other person of great distinction for wisdom and capacity, with a high commission under his prince, may upon some occasion, and for important reasons, condescend greatly, or empty himself, by performing offices more generally done by men of low and mean condition. Still he has the authority belonging to his commission, and the dignity that is inherent in his character, as a man of honour, veracity, and experience.

"And was made in the likeness of men," or, more literally and properly, according to the original, "and being made in the likeness of men:" or, being in the likeness of men; that is, being like an ordinary man, when he was not such. For he was innocent and perfect, and the fulness of the Deity dwelled in him. St. Paul does not intend to intimate that our Saviour was not really a man, but that he appeared like an ordinary man when he was really more. So Rom. viii. 3. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." He was really a man, but had only the likeness of sinful men: for he was innocent and perfect, and was not liable to the sentence of death, or the common law of mortality, binding other men.

Ver. 8. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And being found in his outward appearance as another ordinary man, he humbled himself so far, as to yield up himself to death. Beside all the condescensions of his life, it being the will of God, for great ends and purposes, that he should do so, he yielded up himself to death. He made no resistance. He exerted not any of that extraordinary power, or knowledge, with which he was endowed, to defeat the malicious designs of his unreasonable enemies, but quietly resigned himself, in obedience to God, to death, the death of the cross. He could stoop no lower. So far he submitted and acquiesced, as all know from our Lord's history in the gospels; where are candidly related at large the reproachful, disgraceful, aggravating circumstances of the painful death which Jesus underwent.

Ver. 9, 10, 11. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." On account of that excellent and useful service, that cheerful condescension, and willing obedience, in patiently enduring so painful and ignominious a death, for promoting the great ends, designed by the divine wisdom, God has highly exalted him, far beyond whatever any one else has obtained.

Christ's exaltation began with his resurrection from the dead on the third day, without seeing corruption. After which he ascended to heaven, and was seated in the divine presence, next to God the Father.

"And given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow:" that is, that all intelligent beings may show respect to Jesus, "of things in heaven," angels, "and things on earth," men, "and things under the earth," evil spirits, or men departed, when they shall by him be raised up: "and that every tongue should confess:" particularly that men of all nations and languages on this earth should acknowledge "that Jesus Christ is Lord," and honour and serve him "to the glory of God the Father."

Christ's exaltation is "to the glory of God." God has exalted and appointed him to be Lord, for his own glory. For the exaltation of Jesus is indeed a great display of the wisdom, equity, and justice of the Divine Being. It shows his regard for distinguished and eminent virtue. So extraordinary services and sufferings, and such patience under them, were entitled to special notice. God has conferred on Jesus a reward, greater than could have been devised by man, and highly becoming his Majesty to confer upon him, to whom he had given so important a commission, for the benefit of the human race, and who had executed it with unparalleled faithfulness, zeal, and alacrity, though exceeding painful and difficult.

The glory of Jesus is in another respect to the glory of the Father, inasmuch as that exaltation is a great confirmation of the truth of his doctrine, and must contribute mightily to animate his apostles and others in spreading his doctrine, notwithstanding many difficulties: and it would contribute to bring men to faith in Jesus, as the Christ, and to repentance toward God, and every branch of true holiness, and to eminence therein, and to the practice of meekness, resignation, zeal, courage, and the virtues of every condition, whether prosperous or adverse.

That is what the apostle says of Christ's exaltation. Which is often spoken of in the New Testament, and differently described, but with constant harmony upon the whole. I shall recite some places.

Our Lord himself said to his disciples, before he finally departed from them: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," Matt. xxviii. 18. And says St. Peter, soon after our Lord's ascension, Acts ii. 31. "This Jesus hath God raised up. Whereof we all are witnesses."

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Ver. 36. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." See also ch. v. 30—32. And at the house of Cornelius at Cesarea, ch. x. 40—42. "Him God raised up the third day——And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify, that it is he, which is ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead." Compare this with St. Paul's discourse at Athens, Acts xvii. 30, 31. And says the same apostle, Eph. i. 18—22. "That ye may know the exceeding greatness of his power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And put all things under his feet, and gave him [to be] the head over all things to the church."

Having explained this text according to the last mentioned scheme, I shall now conclude with some remarks and observations.

1. Christians ought to show moderation, and carefully maintain love and friendship with one another, notwithstanding difference of opinion about divers matters.

They should not be willing to unchristianize and anathematize any man, who professes to believe Jesus to be the Christ, and to hold him for the head of the church, and Lord and Master of it.

They should not be unwilling to hold communion one with another. If they cannot do that, they should not deny to others the character of integrity; much less admit a thought of incommoding them in their worldly interests upon account of some difference of opinion. For that is doing as they would not be done unto. And by the practice of force and compulsion when they are in power, they encourage others of different sentiments from them, when in power, to act in like manner. And according to this way of thinking, and acting, oppression and tyranny must prevail every where, and Christian people must be always at variance, devouring one another.

There always has been difference of opinion among men. There were divers sects of philosophy, before the rise of Christianity. Where there is but one opinion, there is absolute tyranny without liberty: or there is total indifference about the things of religion, without thought and inquiry.

Where Christianity is professed, if there is any freedom, the importance of the doctrine will excite thought and consideration. Thence will proceed variety of opinion, unless men's minds were quite alike: which they are not. Nor have all men the like helps and advantages. For which reasons it is not to be expected, that all should see things in the same light.

Though Christians are divided in their sentiments about a Trinity, and the person of Christ, and some other points, yet there are many things in which they agree. They all profess to receive the scriptures as the word of God, and the rule of their faith. And there are divers things, which may be easily learned from scripture, in which therefore they ought to agree.

We are there taught to think of God, as one. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," was proclaimed by God to the Jewish people in the most solemn manner. Indeed all Christians in general agree in this, that there is but one God: however, they may seem to each other at times to multiply deities. Certainly the unity of God is a principle, which we ought to maintain whole and uncorrupted in all its simplicity.

We are likewise to conceive of this one God as eternal, all-perfect, the creator of the heavens and the earth, and the governor of the worlds, which he has made.

We should think of God as great and powerful. Else we shall not fear before him at all times: nor trust in him, in the various trials and occurrences of this life, nor seek to him, and pray to him as we ought, to approve ourselves to him: that is, unless we believe him able to hear those who seek to him, and to reward such as diligently serve him.

It is highly expedient, that we trace out by reason and scripture the evidences of the divine goodness and mercy, that we may not shun and flee from him as inexorable: that we may not be discouraged in doing our utmost to please him, though we cannot attain to an absolute and sinless perfection.

When Moses desired to see the "glory of God," and his request was not rejected, God "made all his goodness to pass before him," and proclaimed: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." See Exod. xxxiii. and xxxiv.

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The inspired scriptures continually represent God to us, as great and amiable.

He is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity" in any with approbation. Hab. i. 13. Yet he accepts the humble and penitent. And is as ready to forgive and accept those who return from their wanderings, as they who relent, and are pierced with a sense of guilt, can wish or desire. Is. lvii. 15. "For thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy," that is, sacred, great and august, "I dwell in the high and holy place: with him also, who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite."

The value and importance of right conceptions concerning these perfections of God may be seen farther shown in Jer. ix. 23, 24.

These are things in which all men of every rank, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, are more concerned, than in any points of a speculative nature, that are very abstruse, and almost unintelligible. The plainest truths are the most important: not the most abstruse and mysterious, as some would persuade men to think. For religion is the concern of all, and the most momentous things ought to be obvious, that none who are not extremely negligent, or wilfully blind, may be unacquainted with them.

And herein is wisdom: to consider God as great, good, and excellent, and to act accordingly, standing in awe of his judgments, studious to gain and keep his favour, by a sincere regard to his holy laws, and doing the things that are well-pleasing in his sight.

We are also to believe, that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world: that he acted by a special commission under God the Father, and that the doctrine taught by him may be relied upon, as containing the true way to life.

Christians must believe, that Jesus had the innocent infirmities of the human nature; that he really had grief, that he really suffered and died, and rose again, and is ascended up to heaven. Otherwise they lose all the benefit of his example.

We must remember, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. For certainly every thing, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, was designed for the glory of God, and is actually conducive to it. By his life, doctrine, death, exaltation, and arguments taken thence, men have been turned from idols to the living and true God.

Jesus, in his person, and example, in his life, and in his death, and in his exaltation, is unspeakably amiable. And we ought to give glory and honour to him, who died for us, and rose again, and is at the right hand of God. And though we have not seen him, we cannot but love him. Still it is not to be forgotten, that "Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

There has been in all times occasion for such hints as these. And those Christians are not to be justified, who instead of praying to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, address almost all their prayers and praises to Christ, without any warrant from the New Testament, and contrary to express and repeated instructions concerning the object and manner of worship.

One of the reasons, why we ought ever to love and honour the Lord Jesus, is, that through him we have been brought unto God, and to the knowledge of his glorious perfections, and overruling providence. As St. Peter writes, 1 Ep. i. 18—21. "Forasmuch as ye know——that ye were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot. Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world; but was manifest in these last times for you: who by him do believe in God that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God."

2. The scheme, which has been last considered, appears to be the plainest and most simple of all. This was taken notice of formerly, and I do not intend to enlarge farther upon it now.

3. According to this scheme, the condescension and meekness, and other virtues of the Lord Jesus, are the most exemplary, and his exaltation is the most encouraging.

For he is truly[a] of kin to us, and a fit example of faith and patience, and rightly the "captain

[a] Heb. ii. 11. "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. All of one.' Ἐξ ἑνος παντες. 'Of one father, that is God.' says Grotius. 'Of one original 'and nature.' Whitby. 'Of one stock and nature.' S. Clarke. 'Have all the same origin.' Beausobre. Who goes on: 'all 'are of one, meaning of Adam. In order to be high priest 'for men, it was necessary, that Jesus Christ should be man. 'This is what renders him sensible to the sufferings of men: 'that which disposes him to love and help them, and which 'put him in a condition, whereby he was able to offer up 'himself a sacrifice for them.' See v. 14, 17, 18. and ch. v. '2. x. 5.' 'Of one Father Abraham.' Says Peirce. Who also adds in his notes: 'This interpretation is confirmed by 'ver. 16, 17. For he laid not hold of angels, but of the seed 'of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be 'made like unto his brethren: meaning the seed of Abraham.' Which makes little difference in the present argument. See before, at p. 321. Note.

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of our salvation:" whose conduct in circumstances like ours, and under like temptations, is inviting and exemplary. Which is agreeable to divers parts of the apostle's argument in the epistle to the Hebrews, ch. iv. 14—16. "Let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." See also ch. ii. 10—18.

Our Lord's exaltation is also, in this way, most encouraging. His condescension and obedience, in acquiescing in his low condition on this earth, and in yielding up himself to death, are set before us as an example to be imitated. And it is added: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." This affords reason to think, that if we practise meekness, and other virtues, and are obedient to God, and promote the good of our fellow-creatures; we likewise shall be highly exalted, and greatly rewarded. But supposing Jesus to have been, before his appearance on this earth, under God, the creator and governor of the world; his glorification after death will not seem to be so much the reward of his faith and obedience here, as the reinstating him in what he enjoyed, and had a right to before. Our case is then so different from his, as to have little or no resemblance. And his glorification, or exaltation, if it may be so called, will be little or no excitement to us.

But we should preserve this quickening motive and consideration, the glory and reward of Jesus in all its force. Which, as it stands in this text, and in many other places of the New Testament, is the most animating thought that can be conceived.

As the apostle says, Heb. xii. 1, 2. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us: looking unto Jesus, the captain, and perfect example of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of God." And says our exalted Lord to the church of the Laodiceans: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne," Rev. iii. 21.

And let us particularly remember the moving exhortation in our text. For though, because of the different sentiments of Christians in some points of a speculative nature, this, and some former discourses have been, in part, controversial, the genuine import and design of the text is throughout practical; and tends to dispose us, as occasions require, to be ready to promote the good of others, and for that end to strive to outdo each other in meekness and condescension. "If there be any consolation in Christ—fulfil ye my joy—Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem another better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things: but every man also on the things of others. Let that mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Who, though he had such peculiar distinctions on account of his high office and character, did not earnestly covet divine honour from men, nor affect external greatness, pomp and splendour, power and authority, ease and pleasure; but emptied himself, and acted as a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For which reason he has been advanced to extensive dominion and power, and great honour and glory: in which all others shall share hereafter, who now have a temper and conduct resembling his.

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A VINDICATION

OF THREE OF

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR'S MIRACLES:

VIZ.

THE RAISING OF JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER, THE WIDOW OF NAIN'S SON, AND LAZARUS.

IN ANSWER TO THE OBJECTIONS OF MR. WOOLSTON'S FIFTH DISCOURSE ON THE MIRACLES OF OUR SAVIOUR.

THE PREFACE.

THE ensuing vindication was drawn up about nine months since. But it was done for my own satisfaction, without any view to a publication at that time. And when the Reverend Dr. Harris's remarks on the case of Lazarus came out, I thought the public and Mr. W. had received in a short compass a full answer to all the material objections of the discourse, with which these papers are concerned.

Nor did I determine to send them to the press, till after I had seen a passage in Mr. W's defence of his Discourses, p. 61, where he says: 'Whoever was the author of the aforesaid treatise, '[The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus] he humbly and heartily begs of him 'to publish what in the conclusion of it he has given us some hopes of, the trial of the witnesses 'of the resurrection of Lazarus, because his Rabbi's objections to it are a novelty and curiosity, 'which, by way of such a reply to them, he should be glad to see handled.' I also wish the ingenious author of that performance may be at leisure to grant Mr. W's request. In the mean time, Mr. W. still expressing a particular regard for his Rabbi's objections, I thought it not amiss to send abroad this Vindication, which I had by me.

If Mr. W. by way of such a reply, means a reply drawn up with the wit and spirit of that author, I freely own it much above my capacity, and am not so vain as to attempt it. If by way of such a reply he means a reply without abusive railing terms, or invoking the aid of the civil magistrate, I have done it in that way. I wish Mr. Woolston no harm; I only wish him a sincere conviction and profession of the truth effected and brought about by solid reasons and arguments, without pains or penalties. And in this point I agree exactly with that learned Dominican, De Maussac, who in his Prolegomena to Raymond Martini's Pugio Fidea, written against Moors and Jews, says: 'We must with Tertullian openly profess, that the new law does 'not defend itself by the sword of the magistrate: forasmuch as it hath pleased Christ the author 'of it, that no man should be forced to the embracing of his law by the punishments of this life, 'or the fear of them, as appears from many places of the New Testament, not only of Paul, but 'also of John, and Luke, and Matthew. Nor is it, as the same father says at the end of his 'book to Scapula, a part of religion to force religion, which must be taken up freely, not upon 'compulsion. Who will lay upon me the necessity of believing what I will not, or of not 'believing what I will (as Lactantius says)? Nothing is so voluntary as religion. In which, if

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'the mind be averse, religion is quite destroyed. Faith is to be wrought by persuasion, not by 'compulsion. Severity has always done harm, and always will do harm: and our minds, like 'noble and generous steeds, are best managed with an easy rein; rather by reason than 'authority, rather by good words than by threats.'[a]

When, at the erecting the Royal Society, into which were freely admitted men of different religions and countries, some it is likely, were apprehensive of this free converse of various judgments, Dr. Sprat[b] frankly asserts, 'That our doctrine and discipline [those of the Church 'of England] will be so far from receiving damage by it, that it were the best way to make them 'universally embraced, if they were oftener brought to be canvassed amidst all sorts of dissenters: '—That there is no one profession amidst the several denominations of Christians, that can be 'exposed to the search and scrutiny of its adversaries, with so much safety as ours.'

Dr. Bentley, in a sermon at a public commencement at Cambridge, says,[c] 'It has pleased 'the Divine Wisdom, never yet to leave Christianity wholly at leisure from opposers; but to 'give its professors that perpetual exercise of their industry and zeal. And who can tell, if 'without such adversaries to rouse and quicken them, they might not in long tract of time have 'grown remiss in the duties, and ignorant in the doctrines of religion?'

These learned men have assured us upon the foundation of the scriptures, of the fathers, and reason, that all force on the minds of men in the matters of belief is contrary to religion in general, and to the Christian religion in particular; and that severity instead of doing good, has always done harm.

These points might be enlarged upon, but nothing new can be offered. Possibly some good men may still be in some doubt concerning the issue of admitting the principles of religion to be freely and openly canvassed. But I think that such may find satisfaction even upon this head in the passages I have quoted, provided they will be pleased to consider them. However I will add a few observations briefly upon this matter.

It is an old saying, which has been much admired and applauded for its wisdom, that truth is great, and strong above all things. There is certainly some real excellence in Truth above error. Great and important truths are clearer than others, and not likely to be mistaken, but to shine the more for examination. The Christian religion in particular, as contained in the New Testament, abounds with evidence.

These are considerations taken from the nature of things. Experience is on the same side. The Christian religion triumphed for the first three hundred years over error and superstition, without the aids of civil authority, against the veneration of ancient custom, against ridicule and calumny, false arguments, and many severe persecutions. From small beginnings by its own internal excellence, and the force of that evidence with which God had clothed it, and the industry and zeal of its honest professors, it spread itself over the Roman empire, and the neighbouring countries.

The Christian church had in the same space of time a triumph within itself over those false and absurd opinions that sprang up under the Christian name. 'These heresies,' Eusebius[d] says, 'soon disappeared one after another, being continually changing into new forms and shapes. 'But the catholic and only true church, always the same and constant to itself, spread and in- 'creased continually; shining out among Greeks and barbarians by the gravity, simplicity, free- 'dom, modesty and purity of its manners and principles.' This joint victory over Gentilism, 'and over heresies, was[e] obtained, as he intimates, by the writings and discourses of the patrons

[a] Nam cum Tertulliano palam est profitendum, legem novam non se vindicare ultore gladio; quod Christo ejus auctori placuerit neminem ad receptionem suæ legis cogi hujus vitæ pœnis, vel earum metu, ut patet ex variis Novi Testamenti locis, tam Pauli, tum Joannis, tum Lucæ, tum Matthæi; quod non sit religionis, eodem teste ad Scapulam in fine, cogere religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debet, non vi. Quis mihi imponat necessitatem vel credendi quod nolim, vel quod velim non credendi? ait Lactantius. Nihil tam voluntarium quam religio; in quâ si animus aversus est, jam sublata, jam nulla est. Fides autem suadenda est, non imperanda; nocuit enim, & nocebit semper, rigor; & ingenia nostra, ut nobiles & generosi equi, melius facili fræno reguntur, docendo magis quam jubendo, monendo quam minando.

[b] History of the Royal Society, p. 63, second edition.

[c] Page 3, quarto edit. 1696.

[d] Αλλων επ' αλλαις αιρεσεων καινολομημενων. ὑπορρεουσων αει των πρωτερων, και εις πολυτροπους και πολυμορφους ιδεας αλλοΐε αλλως φθειρομενων. Προσησι δ' εις αυξησιν και μεγεθος, αει κατα τα αυτα και ὡσαυτως εχουσα, ἡ της καθολε και μονης αληθους εκκλησιας λαμπροτης, κ. λ. H. E. I. 4. c. 7.

[e] Ὁμως δ' ουν κατα τους δηλουμενους αυθις παρηγεν εις μεσον ἡ αληθεια πλειους ἑαυτης, ὑπερμαχους, ους δι' αγραφων αυτο μονον ελεγχων, αλλα και δι' εγγραφων αποδειξεων κατα των αθεων αιρεσεων γραλευομενους. Ibid.

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of truth at that time. And indeed it could be owing to nothing else but to those methods, supported by holy lives and patient sufferings.

Our own time also affords a convincing instance to all that will open their eyes to observe. The protestant states and kingdoms of Europe, as they enjoy greater liberty than others, proportionably exceed their neighbours in the justness of their sentiments, and the goodness of their lives. Indeed there is among us protestants a great deal of vice and irreligion, which all good men observe with grief and concern, and some very bad and selfish men delight to aggravate and magnify with a view to their own evil designs; but still without vanity, if we be barely just to our circumstances, sure we have some reason to glory over some of our neighbours in this respect. Which advantage can be ascribed to no other cause so much as the liberty we enjoy. For introduce among us the tyranny they are under, and we shall be as ignorant, as superstitious, and corrupt, as they.

If then men should be permitted among us, to go on in delivering their sentiments freely in matters of religion, and to propose their objections against Christianity itself; I apprehend, we have no reason to be in pain for the event. On the side of Christianity, I expect to see, as hitherto, the greatest share of learning, good sense, true wit, and fairness of disputation: which things, I hope, will be superior to low ridicule, false argument, and misrepresentation.

For ought I can see, in an age so rational as this we live in, the victory over our enemies may be speedily obtained. They will be driven to those manifest absurdities, which they must be ashamed to own; and be silent in dread of universal censure. But suppose the contest should last for some time, we shall all better understand our Bibles: we shall upon a fresh examination better understand the principles, and the grounds of our religion. Possibly some errors may be mixed with our faith, which by this means may be separated, and our faith become more pure. Being more confirmed in the truths of our religion, we shall be more perfect in the duties of it. Instead of being unthinking and nominal, we shall become more generally serious and real Christians: each one of which advantages will be a large step toward a complete and final victory.

This victory obtained upon the ground of argument and persuasion alone, by writing and discourse, will be honourable to us and our religion; and we shall be able to reflect upon it with pleasure. We shall not only keep that good thing we have received, but shall deliver it down to others with advantage. But a victory secured by mere authority is no less to be dreaded than a defeat. It may appear a benefit for the present, but it really undermines the cause; and strikes at the root of our holy profession. Will any serious and sensible Christian, in the view of a future judgment, undertake to answer for the damage thereby brought to the doctrine of his Saviour, the meek and patient Jesus? as meek in his principles, as in the example he has bequeathed us.

I might now address myself to our adversaries, and tell them, that it is a very desirable thing, that all authors should write as scholars and gentlemen, at least like civilised people: that it is a point long since determined, that in controversial writings, authors should confine themselves to things, that is, the merits of the cause, without annoying persons: that it is grievous to all sorts of men, to have those things which they respect, treated with indecency. I might tell them, that other men's reputation is as sacred as their own. I might remind them, that Christians at this time, generally speaking, are in as good temper as they were ever known to be: that some, being of opinion that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and that it is his pleasure, that men should not be compelled to receive his law by the punishments of this life, or the fear of them, leave men to propose their doubts and objections in their own way: that others have openly declared, that they ought to be invited; and others that they ought to be permitted to propose their objections, provided it be done in a grave and serious manner. Christians have also lately shewn an instance of their moderation towards some books published in opposition to their principles. These are things, which, one would think, should have some effect on ingenuous minds; and draw them off from the design of any rudeness or indecency in their attacks on the sentiments commonly received among Christians. I might also remind our adversaries of some examples of an admirable decorum observed by the disciples of Jesus in their arguings with the Jews and Gentiles. But really one has little encouragement from some late performances to enlarge upon these particulars. And perhaps it would be judged ridiculous, to

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imagine that any men should oppose the gospel with the same spirit, with which it was at first taught and propagated.

Besides, as all men are more concerned for the good conduct of their friends, than of others; so have I been chiefly solicitous on this occasion about the conduct of those who are engaged in the same cause with myself; that it may be such as is best suited to the nature of those sublime principles they profess, and most for the lasting honour and interest of our religion. And though the things here said may be at first disagreeable to some who are, or have been in part of a different sentiment, it is not impossible, but that upon calm and cool reflection they may obtain their approbation.

A passage of Origen out of his Books against Celsus, concerning these three miracles.

I HAVE in the Vindication prolixly shewn, that the literal histories of these miracles are rational, consistent, and credible: so that we may be safe and easy in understanding them in their literal sense, whatever any fathers or other people may say to the contrary. I shall however here set before the reader a passage of Origen written about A. D. 245, which passage I have chosen, not only as containing a testimony to the real performance of these miracles in their literal sense, and shewing, that Origen argued the messiahship of Jesus from miracles; but also as containing an excellent observation concerning the credibility of the evangelists. The reader will likewise perceive that in Celsus's time, who flourished about the middle of the second century, the miracles of Jesus were much talked of, and well known to the heathens: and that the Christians in the time of Celsus, or before, believed the miracles of Jesus, and argued his divine mission from them.

'But this,' says Origen, 'is no new thing with Celsus, when he is not able directly to oppose 'the miracles which Jesus is recorded to have done, to asperse them as juggling tricks. To 'which I have already often replied according to my ability. And here he [a] makes us answer 'him; that we therefore believe him to be the Son of God, because he healed the lame and the 'blind. He adds; and, as you say, raised the dead. For certain we do believe him to be the 'Christ and the Son of God, because he healed the lame and the blind. And we are confirmed 'in it, because that in the prophets it is written: "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, 'and the ears of the deaf shall hear, and the lame man leap as an hart." And that he raised 'the dead, and that this is not a fiction of those that wrote the gospels, is evident hence; that if it 'had been a fiction of theirs, they would have related, many persons to have been raised up, and 'those who had lain a long time in their graves. But it not being a fiction, there are few of 'whom this is related: for instance, the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue (of whom I do 'not [b] know why he said, she is not dead, but sleepeth, expressing somewhat peculiar to her, 'not common to all dead persons) and the only son of a widow, on whom he had compassion, 'and raised him up, after he had bid the bearers of the corpse stop; and the third, Lazarus, 'who had been buried four days.'

[a] ——Και νυν δε φησιν οἱονει ἡμας ἀποκρινασθαι, ὁτι δια τȣτ' ενομισαμεν αυτον ειναι Υἱον Θεȣ, επει χωλȣς και τυφλȣς εθεραπευσε. Προςιθησι δε και το, ὡς ὑμεις φαλε, ανιςη νεκρȣς. ὁτι μεν ȣν χωλȣς και τυφλȣς εθεραπευσε, διοπερ Χριςον αυτον και Υἱον Θεȣ νομιζομεν· δηλον ἡμιν εστιν εκ τȣ και εν πρυφητειαις γεγραφθαι· Τοτε——Ὁτι δε και νεκρȣς ανιςη, και ȣκ εςι πλασμα των τα ευαγγελια γραψαντων· παριςαται εκ τȣ, ει μεν πλασμα ην, πολλȣς αναγεγραφθαι τȣς ανασταντας, και τȣς ηδη χρονȣς εχοντας πλειονας εν τοις μνημειοις. επει δ' ȣκ εςι πλασμα, πανυ ευαριθμητȣς λελεχθαι, την τε τȣ αρχισυναγωγȣ θυγατερα (περι ἡς ȣκ οιδ' ὁπως ειπεν, ȣκ απεθανεν, αλλα καθευδει· λεγων τι περι αυτης, ὁ ȣ πασι τοις αποθανȣσι προσην) και τὸν μονογενη της χηρας υἱον. εφ' ᾧ σπλαγχνισθεις ανεςησεν, ςησας τȣς φεροντας τον νεκρον· και τριτον Λαζαρον τεταρτην ἡμεραν εν τῳ μνημειῳ, εχοντα. Cont. Cels. l. 2. p. 87.

[b] Origen, it seems, did not then think of the reason of this, I have assigned the plain reason of it, p. 352. See also, p. 368.

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A VINDICATION, &c.

Mr. W. begins his fifth Discourse, p. 1, 2, with saying, that he is now to 'take into examination 'the three miracles of Jesus's raising the dead, viz. of Jairus's daughter, Matt. ix. Mark v. 'Luke viii. of the widow of Nain's son, Luke vii. and of Lazarus, John xi.; the literal stories 'of which, he says, he shall shew to consist of absurdities, improbabilities, and incredibilities, in 'order to the mystical interpretation of them.'

I have read over his examination of these miracles, and am still of opinion, that the histories of them are credible.

I. I will therefore first consider all his objections against these literal stories.

II. I will consider the Jewish Rabbi's letter inserted in this discourse.

III. I will shew, that the histories of these three miracles are well circumstanced, and have in them the marks and tokens of credibility.

CHAP. I.

SECTION I.

ANSWER TO MR. WOOLSTON'S FIRST OBJECTION.

I WILL first consider all Mr. W's objections to these 'literal stories.'

Mr. W. says in his preamble, before he comes to propose his objections in form: 'that these 'three miracles are not equally great, but differ in degree, is visible enough to every one that 'but cursorily reads, and compares their stories one with another;—the greatest of the three, 'and indeed the greatest miracle, that Jesus is supposed to have wrought, is that of Lazarus's 'resurrection; which, in truth, was a most prodigious miracle, if his corpse was putrefied and 'stank; and if there were no just exceptions to be made to the credibility of the story. Next 'to that, in magnitude, is Jesus's raising of the widow's son, as they were carrying him to his 'burial.—The least of the three is that of his raising Jairus's daughter, p. 4, 5.'

For my own part, I will not pretend to affirm, that these three miracles are equally great, though the difference is small: but I should think it highly probable, that the being which can give life to a person really dead, though but for a quarter of an hour, or even a minute, is able also to raise to life another that has been dead many days. The length of time in which a person has lain dead from the time he expired does indeed somewhat increase the certainty of his death. But the difficulty of the work of a resurrection from real death is so very great, that length of time from the decease can add but little to it. This alone (if it be true) ruins Mr. W's first observation, however plausible it may have appeared to some. And he himself says, p. 3. 'He believes, it will be granted on all hands, that the restoring a person, indisputably dead, to 'life again, is a stupendous miracle.'

If then it shall be made appear, that the three persons here mentioned were indisputably dead, and raised to life again; or that there are no just exceptions against the credibility of these stories; we have in the gospels three stupendous miracles, which were wrought by Jesus Christ; and we have no occasion to have recourse to any mystical interpretations.

1. 'Observe,' says he, p. 6, 'that the unnatural and preposterous order of time, in which 'these miracles are related, justly brings them under suspicion of fable and forgery. The greatest 'of the three is indisputably that of Lazarus's resurrection; but since this is only mentioned by

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'St. John, who wrote his gospel after the other evangelists; here is too much room for cavil 'and question, whether this story be not entirely his invention: again, if Matthew, the first 'writer, had recorded only the story of Lazarus, whose resurrection was the greatest miracle, 'and if Luke had added that of the widow of Nain's son; and John, lastly, had remembered us 'of Jairus's daughter—then all had been well; and no objection had hence lain against the 'credit of any of these miracles, or against the authority of the evangelists: but this unnatural 'and preposterous order of time, in which these miracles are recorded (the greatest being post-'poned to the last) administers just occasion of suspicion of the truth and credibility of all their 'stories,' p. 9. 16.

On the contrary I maintain, that St. John the last evangelist's recording a miracle omitted by the former, even supposing it to be greater than any related by them, does not administer any just occasion of suspicion of the truth and credibility of all their three stories, or of any one of them.

If there be any force in this argument of Mr. W. it must lie in some one or more of these following suppositions:

1. That some of the three former evangelists have expressly declared, they have related all the miracles, or all the greatest miracles, which Jesus ever wrought, or which they knew of.

2. Or, if they have not expressly declared this, that however they have in their way of writing shewn an affectation of mightily increasing the number of our Saviour's miracles, or of setting down all, and especially the greatest which they knew of.

3. Or else, that the later evangelists have betrayed a fondness in their gospels, to record more in number, or greater in degree, than those who went before them; and thereby give ground for suspicion of forgery and invention.

4. Or lastly, that the omission of a miracle recorded by the last evangelist, if it had been really done, is absolutely unaccountable.

1. 'That some of the three former evangelists have expressly declared, they have related 'all the miracles, or all the greatest miracles that Jesus ever did, or that they knew of.' This they have none of them said. Nor is it so much as pretended, they have said so. Indeed they have often declared the contrary.

2. Or, 'If they have not expressly declared this; that the former evangelists have however 'by their way and manner of writing shewn an affectation of mightily increasing the number of 'our Saviour's miracles, or of setting down all, and especially the greatest which they knew of.' This Mr. W. charges them with: 'To aggrandize the fame of their Master, as a worker of 'miracles,' he says, 'was the design of all the evangelists, especially of the three first,' p. 7. This does not appear from their histories, but quite the contrary. Having related two or three miracles wrought by Jesus, in any place, they content themselves therewith, though they knew of many others. St. Matthew, in his eighth chapter, having set down the miraculous cures of a leper, of the centurion's servant, and of Peter's wife's mother, relates no more miracles particularly, but only says in general: "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick," Matt. viii. 16. And in divers other places he affirms many to have been healed, and many other mighty works to have been done, beside those he puts down. Mark has taken the same summary method upon many occasions. "And at even," says he, "when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils," Mark i. 32, 34. St. Luke has followed the same compendious way of writing. Having related a cure, in a synagogue, of a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and of Simon's wife's mother, he adds: "Now when the sun was setting, all they which had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God," Luke iv. 40, 41.

As they do not multiply their particular relations of miracles, but omit great numbers which they knew of, so neither do they affect always to take the greatest in degree, or those that seem so. I do not pretend to understand all the various degrees of miracles. But it appears to me a more showy and affecting work to cure a demoniac, than to heal a person with a fever. But yet Matthew, in the chapter just quoted, at the same time that he relates the cure of Simon's

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wife's mother, omits all particular accounts of those which were that same day delivered from evil spirits, though there were many such instances. There is in all the gospels but one particular account of any person cured by only touching the hem of Christ's garment, namely, the woman with the bloody issue. And yet there were many other such cases. St. Matthew says, that in the land of Genneserat, they "besought him, that they might only touch the HEM of his garment, and as many as touched were made perfectly whole," Matt. xiv. 35, 36. St. Mark assures us of the same thing. "For he had healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon him for to TOUCH him, as many as had plagues," Mark iii. 10. And in another place he says: "Whithersoever he entered,—they laid their sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch, if it were but the BORDER of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole," ch. vi. 56. St. Luke also confirms this account: "And the whole multitude sought to TOUCH him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all," Luke vi. 19.

Nay, there is a great deal of reason to think, that the evangelists did know of more persons raised to life by Jesus, than those they have particularly mentioned. St. Luke, having given the history of raising up the young man, says immediately: "And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things. And John calling unto him two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?—Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard, how that the blind see, the lame walk,—the DEAD are raised," Luke vii. 18, 19, 22. In St. Matthew our Lord says the same thing in his answer to John's inquiry: "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk—the dead are raised up," Matt. xi. 5. He says, "The dead are raised," in the plural number. St. Matthew therefore must have known of more than one, though he has given the particular history of the ruler of the synagogue's daughter only.

Farther, in answer to this assertion, that the design of all the evangelists was to aggrandize the fame of their master, as a worker of miracles; I would observe, that the gospels, though but short histories, are not filled with accounts of miracles. There are whole chapters together containing nothing but an account of our Saviour's pure and heavenly doctrine. Other chapters contain nothing but parables, which are also interspersed here and there in other parts of the narration. Other chapters are taken up with the cavils of the Pharisees and others, and our Saviour's answers to them, with discourses to the disciples, and divers other matters. So that the miracles alone, separate from the discourses and arguings which they occasioned, make but a moderate part of the gospels. Many miracles undoubtedly the evangelists have related. Nor had Jesus proved himself to be the Messiah, if many miracles had not been performed by him. Such things were expected of the Messiah, when he came, by every body. Therefore it was, that, as St. John observes, "Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did," John ii. 23. And in another place, "Many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?" ch. vii. 31. Nor is there any ostentation in the working of any of these miracles, or in the manner in which they are related: but they are done for the confirmation of that excellent doctrine which Christ taught, and that all men might know that the Father had sent him, and that the word he taught was not his own but the Father's. "If I do not the works of my Father," says he to the Jews, "believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him," John x. 37, 38. And to the disciples: "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwells in me, he doth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very work's sake," ch. xiv. 10, 11.

Since then the first three evangelists appear not to have given an account of all the miracles of Jesus which they knew of, nor of all his greatest miracles, nor of all those which he had raised from the dead: since they have not filled up their gospels with accounts of miracles or other wonderful appearances, and have written all without any marks of affectation or ostentation; it can be no prejudice to the credit of another later historian of Jesus, though he relate some few particular miracles not expressly mentioned by the foregoing.

3. 'Or else, that the latter evangelists have in their gospels betrayed a fondness to record 'more in number, or greater in degree, than those that went before: and thereby give ground 'for suspicion of forgery and invention.' Here St. John, the last evangelist, in point of number, is perfectly innocent; he not having related half so many miracles, as any one of the

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former. The offence therefore, if there be any, must be this, that later evangelists relate greater miracles than the foregoing. And this Mr. W. would insinuate to have been the practice of all in general. For he says, p. 11. 'That the first was sparing and modest in his romance; 'and the second, being sensible of the insufficiency of the former's tale, devises a miracle of a 'bigger size; which still not proving sufficient to the end proposed, the third writer, rather than his 'Prophet's honour should sink for want of a resurrection miracle, forges a story of a monstrously 'huge one.' To this I answer, that a general conclusion ought not to be drawn from a particular instance or two: supposing that the raising of the widow's son of Nain, related by Luke, be greater than that of raising Jairus's daughter, recorded by Matthew; and that the raising of Lazarus recorded by St. John be greater than either of the two former, a suspicion of forgery and invention cannot be fairly admitted, unless an affectation of enlarging miracles appear also upon other occasions. For which reason we will take a view of the conduct, first of all, of the three former evangelists, and then of St. John.

In the first place we will take a view of the conduct of the three former evangelists. Matthew relates a story of Christ's feeding a multitude in a miraculous manner. He says, there were five thousand of them fed with five loaves, and that twelve baskets of fragments were taken up, Matt. xiv. Neither St. Mark, (ch. vi.) or St. Luke (ch. ix.) have related a greater miracle of this kind; but tell the same story with the same circumstances: whereas, if they had been disposed to invent, the two later evangelists might have easily told a much greater miracle of this sort than Matthew had done. Again, St. Matthew has given an account of raising Jairus's daughter, ch. ix. 18. St. Mark wrote after him, and yet he has not told any greater resurrection story, but only the same, ch. v. 23. Nay, sometimes a later evangelist lessens a miracle that had been told by a former: so far are they from forging huge miracles, rather than their Master's honour should sink for want of them. Thus Matthew tells of two possessed with devils in the country of the Gergesenes, healed by Jesus, chap. viii. 28. But Mark, who wrote after him, mentions but one of those men, ch. v. 1. Matthew also speaks of two blind men restored to sight near Jericho, ch. xx. 29; Mark mentions only Bartimeus, ch. x. 46, and St. Luke says: "There was a certain blind man by the way side begging," &c. ch. viii. 35.

There is another thing very observable. One and the same evangelist, who has given an account of a very great miracle of a certain kind, does sometimes a good while after relate another miracle of the same sort, but a great deal less than the former.

Thus Matthew first gives a history of "five thousand fed with five loaves and two fishes," and says there were "twelve baskets of fragments," ch. xiv. But when he afterwards speaks of another miracle of this kind, he mentions but "four thousand fed with seven loaves and a few small fishes," and but "seven baskets full of fragments," ch. xv. These miracles are in the like order recorded in St. Mark, ch. vi. viii. Nay, if the raising of the widow of Nain's son be a greater miracle than raising Jairus's daughter, as Mr. W. supposes, then St. Luke has given an account of his resurrection stories also in this method. For the former is in the seventh, and the latter in the eighth chapter of his gospel.

It is utterly unaccountable, that a forger of miracles should fall into such a method. He who forges stories of miracles knows they are false. His reader's mind must be humoured. By a lesser he may be prepared to receive a greater, which, if told first, had perhaps induced him to throw away the whole tale. Besides a forger of miracles certainly designs to entertain his reader, whereas in this way, instead of being entertained, he must be disappointed. And there can be no reason assigned, why the evangelists should have taken this method, (as I have shewn they have done, more than one of them, in several instances,) but that they had a strict regard to truth, and that the things they relate had been indeed so done. It serves to convince us also, that they had no undue desire to aggrandize their Master; that they have not used art in their compositions, or indulged their own fancy or invention; but have followed a certain train of real, though wonderful and surprising actions.

Now we will take a view of the conduct of St. John, the last evangelist. It is St. John in particular, that Mr. W. means when he says: 'The third writer, rather than his Prophet's 'honour should sink for want of a resurrection miracle, forges a story of a monstrously huge one,' p. 11. But this is somewhat strange, that Mr. W. should impute such an action to St. John; since he has himself said, p. 7, That 'to aggrandize their Master, as a worker of miracles, was 'the design especially of the three first.' Moreover Mr. W. allows, p. 9, that one resurrection

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miracle is sufficient. Why then should it be thought, that St. John hath given an account of one raised from the dead, but that he knew it had been really done?

But not to rely on these observations of Mr. W. though so much in our favour: let us observe St. John's conduct on other occasions; one instance, as I said, not being sufficient. It is he who has informed us of the turning water into wine at Cana in Galilee, John ii. 1. I am fully persuaded this was a real miracle. But it appears to me, (and I suppose to others likewise) one of the least miracles any where ascribed to our Saviour. If St. John forged miracles, why did he put down here so inconsiderable an one? Why did he not tell an huge one? He had full scope here, as much as any where, the former evangelists not having begun so soon in this account of our Saviour's ministry: as is well known to those who are at all acquainted with the harmony of the gospels.

Nor may any say, that the reason of St. John's relating here so small a miracle was, that he judged it not proper to tell a great miracle at first, but to reserve such an one, and particularly the huge miracle of Lazarus's resurrection, for the last. For soon after this he relates a surprising miracle of a great cure wrought on a person at a distance, and that the son of a nobleman. "So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee.—And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him, that he would come down and heal his son, for he was at the POINT OF DEATH—Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth." And afterwards upon inquiry "when the fever left him, the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth. This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee," John iv. 46—54.

Let us view St. John in another place. In the sixth chapter of his gospel he relates a story of Christ's feeding a multitude in a miraculous manner, which is, that he fed "five thousand people with five barley loaves and two small fishes," and that they took up "twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained." This is just the same with what the three other evangelists had told before. But why did not St. John, if he indulged invention, forge here, or somewhere else, a story of a monstrously huge miracle? It had been altogether as easy for him to have told a story of about ten or twelve thousand men, or more, fed with two loaves and one small fish: and to add, that when all had eaten to satisfaction, there were twenty or thirty baskets full of fragments taken up.

There is no reason then to suspect the truth of the history of Lazarus's resurrection, purely because it is a greater miracle than those recorded by the former evangelists. If the miracle recorded by St. John be greater than those recorded by them, it is not owing (for any thing that yet appears) to St. John's invention, but to truth and real matter of fact, and his regard to it, which was equally the concern of them all.

4. The last pretended ground of suspicion of 'fable and forgery' to be considered is, 'That 'the first evangelist's omission of a miracle recorded by the last, if the miracle had been really 'done, is absolutely unaccountable.' Let us hear Mr. W. who is here very copious, in his way, saying the same thing over and over in different words; 'What could be the reason,' he asks, 'p. 6, that Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who all wrote their gospels before John, should omit to 'record this remarkable and most illustrious miracle of Lazarus?—What then was the reason, I 'ask it again, that the three first evangelists neglected to record this renowned miracle of 'Lazarus?' p. 8.

To which I answer, that we are under no obligation to account for the omission of the former evangelists. It would be no sufficient ground to refuse our assent to St. John's history of the raising of Lazarus, though we could think of no manner of reason at all for its being omitted by the three former.

However a variety of reasons for this omission offer themselves. I have already shewn, the evangelists have not affected to increase the number of our Saviour's miracles, but passed by many, and those very great ones, which they knew very well. Mr. W. himself allows, that one miracle of a resurrection is sufficient. He says likewise, p. 3, that 'the restoring a person indis-'putably dead, to life again, is a stupendous miracle.' (I hope to shew hereafter, that every person said to have been raised to life by our Saviour had been certainly dead, and that therefore every one of these instances are stupendous miracles.) If then the least of these is a stupendous miracle, why should we cavil with the evangelists for not putting down every one of

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them, the greatest miracle of all, if indeed there be a difference? Is it not very reasonable to suppose, that an evangelist might content himself with the relation of one person raised from the dead, since one instance is sufficient, and is a stupendous thing?

Another very common occasion of omissions in writers is a regard to brevity. Mr. W. himself could not help thinking of this excuse, 'the studying brevity,' p. 9; but he would not allow it to the first evangelists. Nevertheless, I think, they have the best title to this excuse of any men that ever wrote. The four gospels bound together do not make a large volume: each one singly is a very small book. And yet the evangelists had before them the most copious and engaging subject. Beside the miracles of our Saviour, with circumstances of time and place, the names of the persons, occasions of working them, and divers other extraordinary testimonies given to him from heaven; they have actually inserted in these pieces an account of the wonderful manner of our Saviour's birth, the dangers of his infancy, the miraculous appearances of Divine Providence in his favour, and his removals and journeyings from one place and country to another. They have recorded the substance of his doctrine in plain terms, again and again. They have set down many parables spoken by him, together with their explications. Here is a mission of his twelve apostles and other seventy disciples. They have also given the cavils and questions of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, and our Lord's answers to them; the observations and reflections of the people; our Lord's public discourses before all, and his more private instructions to his disciples; his predictions of his own sufferings, of the destruction of Jerusalem, and many other events; a long and particular account of our Saviour's prosecution, condemnation, and crucifixion, as also of his resurrection and ascension: not to mention the history of the birth, preaching, baptism, and sufferings of John the Baptist our blessed Lord's forerunner.

He who considers this great number and variety of matters contained in the gospels, (as also the engaging nature of them, by which an historian must be much inclined to dwell upon them, both for his own sake and for the pleasure and entertainment of others) must needs allow, that the evangelists have ardently desired and most carefully studied brevity, or their works had risen to a great bulk. They have certainly aimed at this all along, in almost every part of their accounts: and I have before shewn they have done this in their relations of miracles; since having given a particular history of some few, they mention many others in a summary way only. It is not at all strange then (we have here a very good reason of it) that when an evangelist had given an account of one person raised from the dead, it being a stupendous miracle, he contented himself therewith.

Nor ought the evangelists to be blamed for aiming at brevity. They deserve very high commendations both for the design itself, and for their excellent execution of it. Their intention was to give a history of Jesus, that all men might believe him to be the Christ, and might have life through his name. It was absolutely necessary therefore to put down the doctrine of Christ, and also somewhat under each one of those heads above-mentioned. But though the subject was extremely copious; these books being intended for the use of all, for the learned and unlearned, for the poor, the rich, the busy, for all ranks and orders of men in all times, it was highly needful they should be short. Great books are tedious and distasteful; many books are troublesome. And I am persuaded, that the evangelists have much more effectually consulted the benefit of mankind by their short gospels, than by writing, as they might have easily done, many more, or much larger books of the history of Jesus Christ.

I have proved a regard to brevity in general, and particularly in the account of miracles; and have also shewn that this design was necessary and reasonable. This study of brevity must certainly have obliged each one of them to observe silence upon some matters, after they had related others; that they might reserve room for some important events, essential parts of their history, still behind: lest they should proceed to a length and prolixity they had resolved to avoid. It is therefore very easy to suppose in behalf of the three former evangelists, that when they had come to some certain place or period in their history of the ministry of Jesus, they observed they had given a sufficient account of his doctrine and miracles: and since they must reserve room for an account of his last sufferings, and his resurrection; they resolved to pass over in silence what happened between that period and the time of his last journey to Jerusalem, where he suffered.

Such a period as this may be observed in the three former evangelists, by which means they had

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not an opportunity of relating the resurrection of Lazarus. I will shew this particularly of St. Matthew and St. Mark.

St. Matthew says, ch. xix. 1, 2, 3. "And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of JUDEA BEYOND JORDAN. And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there. The pharisees also came unto him tempting him," &c. From which verse, to the sixteenth verse of the next chapter follows an account of the question of the pharisees concerning divorce, Jesus's receiving little children, the young man that came to Christ, some discourses between Christ and the disciples about riches, and a parable. Then at ver. 17, of that chapter (the twentieth) are these words: "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them," &c. From which it is plain, that Jesus was then going towards Jerusalem, a little before his last passover.

St. Mark says, ch. x. i. "And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the FARTHER SIDE OF JORDAN," &c. From whence to the 31st verse is an account of the pharisees' question concerning divorce, the little children brought to Christ, the young man that came to him, a discourse between Christ and the disciples about riches. Then at ver. 32, it is said: "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem," &c.

From which it appears, that St. Matthew and St. Mark have given no particular account of any journeyings of Jesus, and have spoke but very little of any thing else concerning him (except some discourses in the place of his retirement) from the time he came into the country beyond Jordan, till they find him in his way to Jeresalem, before his last passover.

The same thing appears to me in St. Luke also. But that I may not be tedious, I will decline shewing that, particularly at present. I may the better be excused, because he has two resurrection miracles, which is one more than is sufficient.

Now the time of our Lord's coming into the country beyond Jordan, may be learnt from St. John. It was soon after the feast of dedication, John x. 22, which was observed in the winter. For he says: "They sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, and went again BEYOND JORDAN into the place where John at first baptised: and there abode. And many resorted unto him," ver. 39, 40, 41. From which country (according to St. John's account) Jesus afterwards came up to Bethany, and raised Lazarus; and then "went into a country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples," John xi. 54. These removes the other evangelists have omitted for the sake of brevity, or some other reason. Therefore the resurrection of Lazarus could not be well brought into their relation.

There is another reason of their silence about this matter, concurring with their study of brevity. The design of a writer may be collected from his work. From the three first gospels it appears, that the design of the three first evangelists was to give an account of the most public part of our Lord's ministry. They therefore entirely pass over the former part of it, and begin their relation after the imprisonment of John the Baptist. Thus Matthew, ch. iv. 2. "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee." Mark i. 14. "Now after that John was cast into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God." And that St. Luke also begins his account of our Lord's ministry, at about the same time, is apparent from his gospel. See ch. iv. 14, &c.

For the same reason that they omitted the former and less public part of his ministry, before the imprisonment of John the Baptist, they have also slightly passed over what happened from our Lord's arrival beyond Jordan, till he is going up to his last passover. For in this interval he lived somewhat more privately than he had done before. He received all who came to him, either for instruction, or to be healed by him; but he did not go about the cities and villages of Judea, preaching publicly, as he had done for some time before.

St. John observing what had been the method of the three former evangelists, and that they had given a very sufficient account of that part of Christ's ministry which immediately succeeded the imprisonment of John the Baptist, resolved to supply their omissions. By which means he was led to give some history of things done by Jesus between his temptation in the wilderness and the imprisonment of John the Baptist; and also of some things that happened between our Lord's going into the country beyond Jordan, and his journey to the last passover at Jerusalem, in which last interval the miracle of Lazarus was performed.

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We have here (so far as I am able to judge) a fair account of the occasion of the omission of Lazarus's resurrection by the three former evangelists, and of its relation by St. John.

Once more. Since the miracles of Jesus were so numerous (according to the account of all the three first evangelists) that they could not be all particularly related without an inconvenient and unnecessary prolixity; these evangelists might very reasonably prefer some miracles before others, and in particular the miracle wrought on Jairus's daughter before that on Lazarus. If one of these miracles were to be omitted, I would ask, which of the two it should be? I can readily answer for myself; I should choose to omit that of Lazarus rather than the other. And though all men should not presently decide with me, I believe that most would waver in the choice.

The raising any person to life is an amazing and truly divine work. Jairus was a ruler of a synagogue, of an order of men generally averse to Jesus: Lazarus was a friend. The miracle therefore on Jairus's daughter is more unexceptionable in this respect than that on Lazarus. All the miracles of Jesus, considering his blameless character, and the circumstances with which they are related, are really unexceptionable. But there are degrees in all kinds of things; and one miracle, even of Jesus himself, may be more unexceptionable than another; which is an important thing in a miracle, as well as the greatness of the work itself. In this respect the raising of Jairus's daughter is preferable to that of Lazarus. I pass by the honour that results to Jesus from the earnest entreaties of so considerable a person as Jairus, that he would come and lay hands on his daughter, who was at the point of death, or even now dead.

Moreover the miracle on Jairus's daughter was performed in the very height of Christ's public ministry, when there were great numbers continually attending on him; enemies undoubtedly and spies, as well as other people. But to Bethany Jesus came privately with his disciples, and unexpectedly, to raise Lazarus. There happened indeed to be there at that time friends of the Pharisees (as I suppose there where every where) who went away and told them what Jesus had done. But his arrival at Bethany was perfectly unexpected to all, and a surprise even to the family of Lazarus. The evidences which there are in the relation, that our Lord's coming to Bethany at that time was unlooked for, shew that there was no concert between him and his friends there: but for the same reason the Pharisees might not be so well prepared to observe this miracle as some others.

To conclude this point: Mr. W. says, p. 9, 'If Matthew, the first writer, had recorded only 'the story of Lazarus, whose resurrection was the greatest miracle; and if Luke had added that 'of the widow of Nain's son; and John lastly had remembered us of Jairus's daughter, which 'the other evangelists, not through ignorance or forgetfulness, but studying brevity, had 'omitted, then all had been well.'

Undoubtedly, all had been well then, because there are not in the gospels any tokens of forgery or fiction, but plain marks of a real history of matter of fact, and of the strictest regard to truth. But all things are as well now. And if Lazarus's story had stood in the three first gospels in the room of that of Jairus's daughter, there might have been as much room for exceptions as there is now, as appears from what I have just said about the circumstances of these persons. Nor is there any good objection to be brought against the present order. The three first evangelists have wisely taken that miracle which occurred to them in the course of our Lord's most public ministry, and which is in all respects most unexceptionable.

Upon the whole, the reasons I have here offered of the silence of the three first evangelists about Lazarus's resurrection are such as readily offer themselves to my mind; they arise out of the gospels themselves; and they appear to me to be of no small weight. But they are not intended to the prejudice of any other probable reasons assigned by Grotius, or Dr. Whitby, or any other learned and judicious writers.[a] And whether the reasons offered by me or others appear fully satisfactory or not, is not very material: we not being obliged, as I said at first, to assign any reason at all for this omission.

I have endeavoured to put the force of this objection of Mr. W. into the beforementioned suppositions, which I have considered. But there are yet several particulars he has mentioned under this head of what he calls the 'unnatural and preposterous order of time,' which I suppose we must not pass by. He says then, p. 6, 'Since this [Lazarus's resurrection] is only

[a] See Dr. Harris's Reasonableness of believing in Christ, p. 3, 4.

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'mentioned by St. John, who wrote his gospels above sixty years, according to the best com-
'putation, after our Lord's ascension; here is too much room for cavil and question, whether
'this story be not entirely his invention.'

No wise and honest man ought to countenance cavil. It is sufficient that there be no just reason for doubt and question, as there is not here. If any man were now to write a history (never heard of before) of some person raised from the dead, about sixty years ago, in a town not far from one of the chief cities of Europe, and should mention time and place, and names of persons concerned, as St. John has done, he would find no credit with any one. Indeed the design is so foolish and extravagant, that no one will attempt it where there is a liberty of inquiry, as there certainly was in St. John's time, the friends of Christianity being fewer than its opposers. But there is no reason to suppose, St. John first told this story now, sixty years after our Saviour's ascension. He had undoubtedly told it before an infinite number of times, in conversation, and in public discourses, before many people, when the fact might be inquired into, and easily known to be true or false. Eusebius, who took a great deal of pains to get the best information concerning the authority of all the books of the New Testament, informs us from the ancients. 'And when now Mark and Luke [he had spoken of Matthew before] had pub-
'lished their gospels, they say that John, who had hitherto all along preached only by word of
'mouth, was induced to write.'[a] &c.

From which we learn two things; first, that St. John had spent his time in preaching Jesus Christ, from the time of our Lord's ascension: secondly, that his gospel contains the substance of his preaching. For he wrote what he had hitherto taught only by word of mouth. Consequently he had often told his hearers this story of Lazarus's resurrection, long before he wrote his gospel.

Soon after our author says, p. 7. 'The first writer of the life of a hero, to be sure makes
'mention of all the grand occurrences of it.—If a third or fourth biographer after him shall
'presume to add a more illustrious action of the hero's life, it will be rejected as fable and ro-
'mance, though for no other reason than this, that the first writer must have been apprised of
'it, and would have inserted its story, if there had been any truth in it.'

How the lives of heroes are written, I do not know, not being read in legends and romances. But omissions are common in the lives of princes and other great men. Suetonius is allowed to be an excellent biographer, and was a very curious and inquisitive person. Yet no one doubts of the truth and credibility of several things omitted by him, concerning those emperors whose lives he has written. The three first evangelists have not related all the grand occurrences of Christ's life. They expressly say, they have omitted a great number of them. If they had professed to be particular, and to take great care to omit nothing, there had been some ground for this objection: but to make it now, a man must have first lost all modesty.

But it will be said: The objection is not, that the raising of Lazarus is another occurrence, or another grand occurrence omitted by the three former historians; but that Lazarus's resurrection is a most prodigious miracle, p. 4; 'a huge and superlatively great miracle,' p. 7; 'the
'miracle of miracles,' ibid. 'a monstrously huge one,' (p. 11.) in comparison of the other; and especially of the first, 'which is an imperfect and disputable miracle in comparison of the
'other two,' p. 9.

This indeed Mr. W. does say, and he is obliged to say it, however contradictory it may be to what he says at other times. For if the latter miracle related by the last writer be only somewhat greater, more considerable than the former, the argument is of no force. Let us therefore see what the evangelists say. According to St. Matthew, the first writer, Jairus's daughter was dead before Jesus came to the house, for the musicians were come to make lamentations for her. And according to St. John, Lazarus had been dead four days.[b] He mentions no longer time.

[a] Ηδη δε Μαρκου και Λουκα των καθ' αυτους ευαγγελιων την εκδοσιν πεποιημενων, Ιωαννην φασι, τον παντα χρονον αγραφῳ κεχρημενον κηρυγματι, τελος και επι την γραφην ελθειν, τοιασδε χαριν αιτιας. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 24.

[b] St. John says, ch. xi. 17. "When Jesus came he found that he had lain in the grave four days already." But, ver. 39. Martha says to Jesus: "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." Therefore the former four days were incomplete, and it was but the fourth day since his burial. Mr. Woolston therefore (to do him justice) is in the right, when he says, p. 30. 'If those four days are numbered 'according to the arithmetic of Jesus's three days in his grave, 'they are reducible to two days and three nights.' So it is: part of the day on which he was buried, then two whole days, and part of the day on which he was raised, and three nights. Thus, I suppose, if Lazarus died on the first day of the week, he was buried on the second, and raised on the fifth. He had been dead four days complete, or thereabouts; buried four days incomplete.

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But according to Mr. W's representation of the resurrection of Lazarus, that it was a 'superlatively great miracle, a monstrously huge one,' in comparison of the other; one would be apt to conclude, that Lazarus had been said by St. John to have been dead at least forty or fifty years, whereas he does not say half so many days. The difference as to time between that of the widow of Nain's son and Lazarus is still less; for he was not only dead, but carried forth to burial.

I argue therefore against Mr. W. thus: St. John's miracle exceeds in degree the other two but a small matter, therefore he did not invent and forge it. For if he had had a design of forging a miracle, from a sense of the insufficiency of the former, he would have made it prodigiously or vastly greater than these, which he has not done. The reader will judge, whether this be a confutation of this objection of Mr. W. or not.

I will add farther: The miracle on Lazarus exceeds that on Jairus's daughter in but one circumstance, which is, that he had lain dead a little longer. In several other respects the miracle on Jairus's daughter is superior to that on Lazarus; for Lazarus was a friend, but Jairus was a stranger and a ruler of a synagogue; and the miracle on his daughter was performed in the most public part of our Lord's ministry. St. John therefore did not invent the story of Lazarus from a sense of the insufficiency of the former: for if he had invented, he would have related not only a history of a person dead much longer than the other (as I shewed just now) but the person to be the subject of his miracle would have been a stranger, and a Rabbi, a ruler, or a nobleman, or some other person of figure: and he would have placed it, in all likelihood, in the most public part of Christ's ministry. What I say here appears to me to be of the highest degree of probability: that if St. John had contrived a miracle, because he judged the former not sufficient, he would not have taken a friend of Jesus for the subject of it; and he would have related it with several other different circumstances.

One quotation more from our author, before we leave this article. 'Supposing John (who 'was then above a hundred, and in his dotage) had not reported this miracle of Lazarus; but 'that Clement (joining it with his incredible story of the resurrection of a phœnix) or Ignatius, 'or Polycarp, or the author of the apostolical constitutions had related it; would not your 'Christian critics have been at work to expose it?' p. 12.

This argument is proposed with great airs of assurance, but I cannot see the force of it. As to Clement's story of the phœnix, we have nothing to do with it here, that I know of; it not being a Christian miracle, but an old heathen story told by many authors, though with somewhat different circumstances. If Clement, Ignatius, or Polycarp had given the history of a miracle of Jesus, written in a credible manner, with proper circumstances, I make no doubt but a due regard would be had to their authority, in proportion to their nearness to the time of Jesus.

As for John's being above a hundred, when he wrote his gospel; it shews us he was thirty years of age or more, when Jesus lived here on earth; and therefore was arrived at years of discretion, and was able to judge of things. That he was in his dotage, there is no proof. His gospel is not the work of a man in his dotage. Let Mr. W. shew me any where out of the Bible, so fine, and yet so simple, so natural a narration of a matter of fact, as that of the cure of the man blind from his birth, contained in the ninth chapter of St. John's gospel: let him shew me any where else such a prayer, as that recorded in his seventeenth chapter: let him shew me such discourses, so affectionate, so moving, so every way excellent, as those in his fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters: I say, let him shew me any where else such things as these, not written by any man in his dotage, but in the prime of life, and the full vigour of his wit and understanding.

SECTION II.

Answer to Mr. W.'s Second Objection.

'I PASS,' says Mr. W. p. 15, 'to a second observation.—What became of these three persons after their resurrection? How long did they live afterwards? And of what use and advantage were their restored lives to the church or to mankind? The evangelical and ecclesiastical history is entirely silent as to these questions, which is enough to make us suspect their

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'stories, to be merely romantic or parabolical; and there were no such persons raised from the 'dead; or we must have heard somewhat of their station and conversation in the world 'afterwards.'

If I may speak my mind freely: this, and all that follows under this observation, is mere idle and impertinent harangue. I have so good an opinion of the generality of mankind, as to suppose them wiser than to be capable of being moved by it, to admit any doubt of the truth of these histories.

We are not concerned to know, what became of those persons whom Jesus cured or restored to life. A miracle on the body does not mend the dispositions of the mind. Some of those whom our Saviour healed were ungrateful. Of the ten lepers who were all cleansed as they were going to shew themselves to the priests, according to our Lord's direction, there was but one "that returned to give glory to God," Luke xvii. 12. Others there were, who published every where the things that God had done for them. Some of these the evangelists have mentioned. But were they or ecclesiastical writers after them obliged to write the lives of all whom Jesus and his apostles healed?

For the truth of these miracles we have the testimony of the evangelists, honest and credible men. Their testimony is confirmed by the event. The gospel of Christ had not had the mighty progress in the hands of the apostles, which it had, if these things had not been true. What they did, who were the subjects of these works, we do not need to know particularly. But the event, or the great progress of the gospel in a short time, renders it highly probable, that many of these persons by modest and humble acknowledgments of the benefits they had received, by satisfying inquisitive persons, and by other means, according to their several stations, helped forward the work of the apostles and others engaged in spreading the doctrine of Christ.

Our author, speaking of Lazarus, who is said by[a] Epiphanius, (though without any certainty) to have lived thirty years after he was raised, asks, p. 16: "How did he spend his time 'all that while? Was it to the honour of Jesus, to the service of the church, and propagation 'of the gospel?'

Why very probably, so long as he lived, he spoke, upon all proper occasions, of this miracle wrought on himself, and of the other miracles performed by Jesus upon others; and exhorted men, suitably to his station and circumstances, to believe on him as the Messiah. But it is most probable, that our Saviour did not give him a special commission, like that of the apostles, to go preach the gospel. I believe our Lord had a greater regard to the decorum of things, or, if you please, to the rules of modesty and prudence. There was nothing better, than for Lazarus to stay at home, to be ready to answer inquirers, who might come to Bethany to know the truth of the fact reported concerning him. Abroad the testimony of others was more worth than his own. And St. John's short account of his resurrection is more valuable than a history of it written by Lazarus himself would have been. 'And of Jairus's daughter, and of the widow of 'Nain's son, which is astonishing, we read nothing at all,' p. 17. Not astonishing in the least. Women are seldom admitted to public posts. The apostles did not allow women to speak in the church. It is no wonder, therefore, that Jairus's daughter has been no where mentioned, but on occasion of the miracle wrought upon her. Should her private conversation afterwards have been recorded? I think it was not necessary. And after all, she may have been eminently useful some way or other, though we have heard no more of her. The memory of many great actions has been entirely lost. We have no authentic accounts of the preaching of many of the apostles of Christ. As for the widow of Nain's son: he may have died soon after, or he may have been a very useful person, or he might not be qualified for public service. We know nothing of these matters, nor was any body obliged to inform us of them.

SECTION III.

Answer to Mr. W's Third Objection.

Our author says, p. 19. 'By way of objection to the latter of these three miracles, let us 'consider the condition of the persons raised from the dead.—Where then was his wisdom and

[a] Quin & illud inter traditiones reperimus, triginta tum annos natum fuisse Lazarum, cum a morte excitatus est; atque idem ille postea triginta aliis annis vixit. In Hæres. lxvi. sect. 34. Note 15. of Mr. W's fifth disc. p. 16.

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'prudence to choose these three persons above others to that honour?' p. 20. I answer, that Jesus did not ordinarily choose the subjects of his miracles, but healed those chiefly who earnestly implored his mercy, or who pressed on him to be healed, or importunately desired it of him by others, when they could not possibly come to him themselves. It was great wisdom and prudence in him not ordinarily to choose persons, or to do a miracle without being first earnestly sought to for it. If he had acted otherwise, it would have been made use of as an exception against the truth and reality of the miracle, and the extent of his power. Indeed the widow of Nain's son was in some sense chosen; but since he was publicly carried forth to burial, and the meeting of the corpse was perfectly casual, this choice is unexceptionable.

'Jairus's daughter was an insignificant girl of twelve years old.—The widow of Nain's son 'too was but a youth, and whether older than the girl above is doubtful,' p. 21.

Never the worse at all, on any account whatever. The power of raising a girl is as great as that of raising a woman; and a boy of twelve years old, as a man of forty. The suspicion of cheat and fraud is less; the benignity of Jesus is greater, in that he disdained not the meanest objects.

'But that an insignificant boy and girl (forsooth!) and the obscure Lazarus, are preferred by 'Jesus to such public and more deserving persons is unaccountable.' p. 25.

The obscurity of Lazarus is no objection at all, as appears from what has been already said concerning the two others. The more inconsiderable Lazarus was, the benignity of Jesus is the greater. But they were none of them preferred to others. Were there any other dead persons proposed to Jesus to be raised, whom he refused to concern himself with, though he raised these? None at all. If by preferring is meant choosing out of the number of those who died in Judea during our Saviour's ministry; it has been answered already. Jesus could not ordinarily choose an object, without being desired. It might have had an appearance of ostentation, and enemies would have said, of fraud and deceit.

'Jesus raised the dead, and wrought other miracles say our divines often, not only to ma-'nifest his own power and glory, but his love to mankind: for which reason his miracles are 'useful and beneficial, as well as stupendous and supernatural acts.—On this topic our divines 'are very copious, as if no more useful and wonderful works could be done, than what he did, 'p. 23. Instead of a boy and a girl, and even of Lazarus, who were all of no consequence to 'the public, either before or since, I should think Jesus ought to have raised an useful magis-'trate,' &c. p. 24.

Divines say very truly, that most of our Saviour's miracles were acts of beneficence to those on whom they were performed, and were in this respect suitable to the goodness and excellence of his doctrine, and to the goodness and meekness of disposition, that appeared in all the other parts of his life. But the main design of a miracle is not the profit of him, who is the subject of it, nor of others his friends and relations, who are interested in him. The great use of a miracle is to attest the divine mission of him who works it, and to give authority to the message or doctrine which he brings. And for this purpose the raising a poor day-labourer is as useful, as raising a prince; and opening the eyes of a blind beggar by the way-side, as curing a powerful magistrate, or a wealthy merchant.

It is not the intention of divines to strain the notion of our Saviour's beneficence toward all the miserable objects that were in Judea, as if he had been obliged to act to the utmost of his power for the temporal advantage of men at that time. Mr. W. acknowledges as much. 'That Jesus 'ought to have raised all that died, wherever he came during the time of his ministry, none, I 'presume, can hold,' p. 20.

That a miracle may be of use to confirm the character of a prophet, and the truth of his doctrine, it is necessary not only that it be done, but that it be known to be done by him, or the divine power concurring with him. Jesus, when at Jerusalem, might have healed a sick person in Galilee, without the person himself, or any other knowing who cured him. But this, though an act of goodness, would not have made known our Saviour's character. Let us give an instance. Jesus might have immediately healed the daughter of Jairus (as he did the centurion's servant, Matt. viii.) upon Jairus's coming to him, and desiring him to come and lay his hands on her. And this would have been perhaps an act of greater goodness to her, than to raise her after she was dead. But then we had not had the proof of his power and divine character, and of the truth of his doctrine, which we now have from the miracle of raising her from the dead. Nay he

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might have healed her, before her case came to be so desperate as to oblige her father to come to him for help. This would have been a still greater act of goodness to her and her friends, if we measure goodness and beneficence purely with a regard to the temporal ease and advantage of men.

The spiritual interests of men are more considerable than their bodily, temporal interests. The spiritual interests of many are to be preferred to the temporal interests of a few others. Though therefore it might have been many ways more for the temporal advantage of Lazarus and his family, for Jesus to have cured that sickness of which he died, when his sisters first sent to him; yet it was infinitely greater benignity, with regard to the spiritual interests of mankind (of all the sincere and inquisitive, the children of wisdom at that time, and among them, of Lazarus and his sisters, and also of all such persons in future times) not to interpose at first, but to come up to Bethany, and there raise Lazarus from the dead, after he had been buried four days.

I will proceed to one thing more, without observing intermediate steps or gradations. Our blessed Saviour might have healed all the persons he cured during his ministry, and also many others, without their coming to him, or without their so much as thinking of him, and without any one else knowing that those cures were wrought by him: but then neither the men of that age, nor we, had had the proof we now have from his works, of the certainty of a future life, and of the other parts of Christ's doctrine, so admirably suited to raise men from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven, and to turn them from Satan to God: we had also lost that eminent and undeniable proof they now afford us of our Lord's great character: we had not been assured, as we now are, of that unspeakable instance of the love of God, in sending his Son into the world for our salvation.

How far Jesus may have extended his goodness even to the bodies of men, during his abode here on earth, beyond all those miraculous instances of his power for attesting his character, we cannot tell. But it was necessary that the exercise of his goodness in the way of working miracles for the proof of his mission and doctrine should be chiefly confined to those who were disposed to ask help of him; whether they were poor or wealthy, mean and obscure, or learned and honourable: and that the exercise of his goodness should be also regulated in a great measure by the nature of their desires. This way his miraculous works are free from ostentation, and are unexceptionable.

But yet, when he had an opportunity of doing good, without incurring the suspicion of ostentation or concert, he readily manifested his compassion and benignity to the distressed; as he did in particular to the widow of Nain, whose son he raised to life when he was carried out to be interred.

And herein indeed appear wisdom and goodness, that those acts of beneficence performed by him on the bodies of men, and those perhaps chiefly poor and mean persons, such mostly having come to him, though some wealthy and honourable (all however who came to him, none having been refused, and some who never sought to him) have been made to subserve the great design of Almighty God in saving mankind; and give credit to that doctrine, which is of such admirable use and tendency to cure the minds of men of all evil habits and dispositions: to cure, I say, the minds of men, not of one country or age, but of all the world in all time. This is the wisdom of God, and the power of God, and the goodness of God.

'I should think,' says Mr. W. p. 24. 'Jesus ought to have raised an useful magistrate, 'whose life had been a common blessing; an industrious merchant, whose death was a 'public loss.'

The design of Christ in coming into the world was not barely to promote the temporal advantage of men, but for an infinitely higher end. For which reason, I should think, he should cure and raise those, whose cure or restoration would most serve this end. These are they only, who might be cured without suspicion of cheat or fraud; which are chiefly such as voluntarily came to him, or whom he casually met with; whether magistrates or subjects, wealthy or poor.

Soon after he says, p. 25, 'Such instances of his power would have demonstrated him to be 'a most benign as well as mighty agent; and none in interest or prejudice could have opened 'their mouths against him, especially if the persons raised from the dead were selected upon the 'recommendation of this or that city.'

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Ridiculous! Should Jesus have gone to the magistrates and people of some town or city, and tell them: if they had lately lost any useful magistrate or worthy citizen, whom they wished to have restored again to life, and would be pleased to recommend such person to him, he would raise him up? I think no minister or messenger of God, endowed with the power of working miracles, would be guilty of such meanness. And if no such persons came to Jesus, it was not his fault. However there were some such, and they were not refused, but were as readily gratified as any others. Thus in the case of the centurion, whose servant was "sick and ready to die," we are assured, "that when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, and when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this," Luke vii. 2, 3. And one of the persons raised to life by Jesus was the daughter of a ruler of a synagogue. And if any others had been recommended in a like manner by rulers or elders, there is no reason to doubt but they would have been received.

But certainly it was by no means needful, that the miracles of Jesus, of any kind, should be generally performed on magistrates and wealthy men, or at their recommendation. This method might have served indeed to stop men's mouths, but not to convince them. There is an observation of Origen in his answer to Celsus, which is much more judicious than any thing said by our author upon this subject. 'It is not,' says Origen,[a] 'a number of impostors met together, who 'in compliance with the orders of a king or emperor have decreed, that he [Jesus] should be 'made a God; but the creator of the world himself,' &c. It is much more for the honour of Jesus, for the credit of his miracles and religion, and for the satisfaction of men in all times, that his miracles and doctrine obtained belief and esteem without the power and authority of magistrates, by the force of their own internal excellence and evidence.

'But now I am speaking,' says Mr. W. 'of the fitness and unfitness of deceased persons, to 'have this grand miracle wrought on them; it comes into my head to ask, why Jesus raised not 'John the Baptist to life again? A person of greater merits, and more worthy of the favour of 'Jesus, and of this miracle, could not be.—This is a very reasonable question,' p. 25. A very silly one, most people will think. John the Baptist had performed his work, and finished his course. If he had been soon raised to life again, the value and merit of his testimony given to Jesus had been much weakened. If it had been related in the history of Jesus, that John the Baptist had been raised again to life by him; Mr. W. might have said, it gave ground for suspicion of collusion between the principal and forerunner.

SECTION IV.

Answer to Mr. W.'s fourth Objection.

PAGE 26, he says, 'That none of these raised persons had been long enough dead to amputate all doubt of Jesus's miraculous power in their resurrection.' They have been long enough dead to assure us of a miracle, if they are raised, who have been so long dead that their nearest and most affectionate friends bury them, or carry them out to be buried: as have they also, who have on them such evident tokens of their being expired, that their friends hope no longer for help from those, on whose assistance they before depended, so long as there were any signs of life. The former is the case of the widow of Nain's son, and of Lazarus; the latter of Jairus's daughter. When Jairus came to Christ, his daughter was expiring, for he says in Matthew, "My daughter is even now dead;" in Mark, "lieth at the point of death." Still he had hopes of help from Jesus, for he says: "But come and lay thy hand upon her and she shall live." But before Jesus got to the house she expired, and all hopes were gone. "And there came (says St. Mark) from the ruler of the synagogue's house, certain which said, Thy daughter is dead, why troublest thou the Master any further?" ch. v. 25. This is good reason to suppose she was really dead. These messengers doubtless were dispatched away to Jairus, to acquaint him with the death of his daughter, by those persons that attended her during her sickness, and were convinced of her being expired.

[a] Ου γαρ συνελθοντες γοητες, χαριν τινοντες βασιλει τινι κελευοντι, η ἡγεμονι προσασσοντι, πεποιηκεναι δοξαν αυτον ειναι θεον, αλλ' κ. τ. λ. Contr. Cels. l. 3. p. 133. edit. Cantab.

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Mr. W. says a good deal more about the time these persons ought to have been dead. Speaking of Jairus's daughter, he says, p. 27, 'Supposing she was really dead, yet for the sake 'of an indisputable miracle in her resurrection, it must be granted, that she ought to have been 'much longer, some days, if not weeks, dead and buried.' And of the event at Nain, he says, p. 29, 'All I have to say here, is, that if Jesus had a mind to raise the son of this widow, in 'testimony of his divine power, he should have suffered him to have been buried two or three 'weeks first.'

Mr. W's first proposition here appears to me very strange, 'That supposing she was really 'dead, yet for the sake of an indisputable miracle—she ought to have been dead much longer.' If she was really dead (as she certainly was) and was restored again to life, it is with all men of sense and reason an indisputable miracle.

As for the time which Mr. W. requires, that a person must be 'some days, if not weeks, 'dead and buried; buried two or three weeks first:' this is not needful. If we could not be certainly assured of the death of persons, by evident tokens appearing in their bodies, in less time than Mr. W. prescribes here, we should not be justified in committing to the grave any man in less time. Much less could we endure to bury our dearest friends and relations under two or three weeks or more after they seem to have expired. We cannot justify burying men, but on a well-grounded supposal that they are really dead. We cannot justify the laying out of men's bodies, as we do very soon after visible tokens of death, if those tokens were not sufficient.

And since they buried their deceased friends much sooner in those warm countries, than we do here, this must doubtless have been, because dead bodies became also much sooner offensive there, than in our cold climate. This circumstance strengthens my argument: for how can we imagine that persons should, by burying their deceased friends so early, put them absolutely and entirely beyond any manner of possibility of reviving, unless they might well and safely depend upon some certain, experienced, and uncontestable proofs and evidences of their being already deprived of any remaining life?

There may have been mistakes made sometimes, though but very rarely; and even those accidents have chiefly happened in cases of sudden death. Where any dangerous distemper precedes, the possibility of mistake is very small, and can seldom happen. This was the case, we know, of Jairus's daughter, and of Lazarus: and this confirms us still more in the belief, that their friends were not mistaken in the persuasion of their death; upon which persuasion the one had been buried, and for the other the public mourners were come to make lamentations. And as for the young man at Nain; though we do not know how he died, whether suddenly, or of a gradual illness, we may rely upon the fondness of a mother, a widow too, that she would not have carried forth to burial her only son without knowing he was become a dead corpse.

It is so natural, and even unavoidable for men that argue against plain truth, to contradict themselves; that it is hardly worth while to take any notice of Mr. W's self-contradictions. I shall only just observe, that this story of Lazarus's resurrection, which before was represented by him as the miracle of miracles, superlatively great, and monstrously huge, as if nothing greater and more prodigious could be devised or thought of, is here pretended not to be big enough to assure us it was any miracle at all. For he says, p. 31: 'It is plain that Lazarus 'was not so long dead and buried, as that there is no room to doubt of the miracle of his 'resurrection.'

Mr. W. says, p. 28, 29: 'And where there is a possibility of fraud, it is nonsense, and mere 'credulity to talk of a real, certain and stupendous miracle, especially where the juggler and 'pretended worker of miracles has been detected in some of his other tricks.' Perhaps there are few or no cases where there is an absolute impossibility of fraud. It is sufficient that fraud be improbable, unlikely, and next to impossible. In such a case (which is ours) it is not nonsense and mere credulity, but the highest reason to admit the truth of a relation; and to assert a real, certain and great, or if you choose, stupendous miracle. A fraud is as easy to happen in a person who has been dead and buried many weeks, as in one publicly carried out to burial.

Herein however I readily agree with Mr. W. that it is mere credulity to talk of such a thing, where a juggler has been detected in any other tricks. But where was he who is said to have raised the widow's son at Nain detected of any tricks? When Mr. W. has detected such

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a thing in any one case, I will allow it in this also. But till then, as this story is credibly related, I shall continue to pay a regard to it.

Our author has several other things under this observation; but as they do not properly belong to this, of the length of time these persons are said to have been dead, but rather to his sixth observation, of the circumstances of the narrations, I shall take no notice of them here: I have already spoken to some things here, which might have been let alone till we come to that observation.

SECTION V.

Answer to Mr. W's Fifth Objection.

5. 'THE consideration that none of these raised persons did or could after their return to 'their bodies, tell any tales of their separate existence; otherwise the evangelists had not been 'silent in their main point,' &c. p. 32.

'None of these persons,' Mr. W. says, 'told any tales of their separate existence.' So I suppose with him. As for the two first: how should they? being only, as Mr. W. says, 'an insignificant boy and girl,' of twelve years of age, or thereabouts. Or if they did, the evangelists were wiser than to take any notice of their tales. As for Lazarus, I would suppose he was a wiser man than to indulge a vain inclination of amusing people with idle stories of no use. Besides, I presume he had been a follower of Jesus before he died. And when he had been raised from the grave, it is likely he was yet farther confirmed by that wonderful work wrought upon himself in the belief that Jesus was the Messias: and that instead of pretending to be wise above what Jesus taught, he would exhort men, and especially his neighbours, to attend him, and hear him, who had the words of eternal life.

The evangelists have recorded no tales told by any of these three raised persons. I much admire this objection. I am very glad they have not mentioned any such things. Jesus himself, who was from above, who was in the bosom of the Father, has not delivered any profound unintelligible theory of the separate state of existence. The great apostle Paul, who was "an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead," Gal. i. 1: who had been "caught up into the third heaven," and "into paradise;" who had "abundance of revelations," has not attempted any such thing: but declares that the things he heard were "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter," 2 Cor. xii. 2—7. He treats with the utmost contempt every thing that has a show of wisdom without real advantage: exhorts his dear son Timothy to refuse "profane and old wives fables, and exercise himself rather unto godliness," 1 Tim. iv. 7: to "shun profane and vain babblings," 2 Tim. ii. 16: and requires him to "charge [men] before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit," v. 14.

Jesus and his apostles have made known the certainty of a resurrection of the just and unjust; a general judgment, wherein men shall be judged in righteousness; when the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal. What they say of the different recompenses of good and bad is great and awful, sufficient to affect the minds of all; but they have not entered into a detail of needless particulars, above the capacity of men in the present state.

Religion is the concern of all. That is the most perfect religion, which is suited to all. This is the Christian doctrine, which, as it was preached to the poor, and to every creature under heaven, is wonderfully suited to all capacities.

To the immortal honour then of the evangelists be it said, that when they wrote the history of the preaching and miracles of Jesus, who knew all things, they have not recorded dreams and visions, or abstruse theories of a separate state, for the amusement of mankind, but important certain truths, taught by Jesus for their edification.

'Was any person, in this age, to be raised to life, that had been any time dead; the first 'thing that his friends and acquaintance would inquire of him, would be to know where his soul 'had been, in what company,' &c. p. 32. Not impossible: vulgar minds might show such weakness even now. And the greatest minds, while in an uncertainty about another life, might

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have acted in this manner. Thus some of the greatest men of antiquity, justly admired by all the world, have actually told dreams, or accounts of departed men, and doubtless with a good intention. But he who has the sun needs not the light of a candle. The evangelists, keeping close to their master, are vastly superior to the greatest men that were before them.

Our author is pleased to trifle so much, as to put questions about the place where the souls of these persons had been, between their death and their being raised up again; and particularly the soul of Lazarus. 'But the thought, that any of Jesus's friends should go to hell, will 'not be borne with. And if Lazarus's soul had been in paradise, it was hardly a good work in 'Jesus to recall it,—to the troubles and miseries of this wicked world,' p. 34. Suppose Lazarus's soul to have been asleep, or in paradise, or in heaven itself, it might be a very good work in Jesus to recall it into this world for a time. It was much for the spiritual benefit of many, who might be induced by the great miracle of raising him to life, to believe in Jesus, and receive his doctrine, which, when heartily embraced, is fruitful of the greatest benefits. Nor could the soul of any good man be unwilling to return for a time to the troubles and miseries of this wicked world, how grievous soever, in order to serve the great design of saving his fellow creatures; for which end Jesus his Saviour descended from the height of glory he had with the Father, took flesh, and underwent the troubles and sorrows of this mortal life. And it might issue in the end to the advantage of Lazarus himself: as no man can doubt, who believes a future judgment, and that Jesus will preside therein, which is the doctrine of the New Testament.

SECTION VI.

Answer to Mr. W's Sixth Objection.

6. And lastly, 'Let us consider the intrinsic absurdities and incredibilities of the several 'stories of these three miracles, p. 36. As to Jairus's daughter, and her resurrection from the 'dead, St. Hilary [a] hints, that there was no such person as Jairus;—and he gives this reason, 'and a good reason it is, why he thought so, because it is elsewhere intimated in the gospel 'that none of the rulers of the synagogues confessedly believed on Jesus,' John vii. 48, and xii. 42.

St. John's words in the last quoted text are these: "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." This text is no ways to our author's purpose. The rulers here mentioned by St. John probably were members of their great council at Jerusalem, or of the lesser councils in some other cities: but Jairus [b] was the ruler of the synagogue. But supposing Jairus to have been one of that same sort of rulers which St. John speaks of, here is no inconsistency. Jairus might believe in Jesus and come to him to heal his daughter, and yet not publicly "confess him to be the Christ."

'But why did Jesus say, this girl was but in a sleep?' p. 36. Mr. W. had before affirmed this: 'Jesus himself says, she was but asleep.' And it is true that our Lord, "when he came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels,—he said unto them, Give place, for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth." But by this our Lord did not intend to deny that she was expired, but to assure them in a modest way, that she would be raised up as it were out of sleep. That this is our Saviour's meaning, is most evident from his use of these same expressions in St. John concerning Lazarus. See John xi. 4, &c. Lazarus's sisters sent to Jesus to inform him that their brother was sick. "When Jesus heard that, he said," to his disciples, "this sickness is not unto death," that is, to his final death, to a lasting death. (So the words must be understood, because, according to St. John, Lazarus did actually expire and die of that sickness.) "But for the glory of God." Afterwards St. John says: "These things said he, and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said the disciples, Lord, if he sleep he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death.—Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." Where in formal express terms St. John

[a] In loc. Matt. [b] Vid. Grot. in Matt. ix. 18.

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assures us, that by sleep our Lord meant death. No critical reader will doubt, that this is the meaning of Christ's words, which he spoke of Jairus's daughter. Nor will any lover of virtue endure to be robbed of so singular an instance of such charming virtues as humility and modesty. Instead of these modest expressions, "Give place, for the maid is not dead but sleepeth:" had Jesus been a juggler and impostor, as is pretended, or had this history been a forgery, we had had some such silly boasting speech as this: Ay! the young woman is really dead, and your lamentations are well grounded: but let me only look upon her, and say a few words over her, and depend upon it, you will see her alive again, and as well as ever.

'If he were going to work a miracle in her resuscitation, he should not have called death 'SLEEP; but if others had been of a contrary opinion, he should first have convinced them of 'the certainty of her death,' p. 36, 37. That is, Jesus should have spent time, and taken pains to convince them of what they were convinced of before, and were so positive in, that when they understood him to say the maid was not expired, but only sleeping in a natural sleep, "they laughed him to scorn."

It follows in our author: "And why did he charge the parents of the girl not to speak of 'the miracle?' There might be many reasons for this, and those founded not upon the falsehood or uncertainty of the miracle, but on the certainty and greatness of it. This prohibition then was partly owing to the humility and modesty of Jesus, who, instead of ordering men to proclaim his works, often desired them to be silent about them. It was partly owing to prudence, that he might have opportunity during the short time his ministry was to last, for teaching men the will of God, and for instructing his disciples; that he might avoid the suspicion of setting up for a ruler and governor, or attempting any disturbance; which suspicion might have arisen in men's minds, if the concourse of men to him had been too numerous.

These prohibitions therefore may be understood to be only temporary or for the present. Thus our Saviour forbid his disciples to speak of the transfiguration on the mount, "until the son of man be risen from the dead," Matt. xvii. 9. It was not long before he was to be taken out of this world: and then they on whom he wrought any miracles might speak freely of them, without giving any occasion to suspect his designing a temporal kingdom, to the prejudice of the civil government then in being.

Besides, though the parents of this maid were to be silent of this miracle, here were many others that might speak of it. All her friends who knew she was dead, were witnesses of her resurrection, when they saw her alive again.

And rather than suspect any bad design in this prohibition, which is so contrary to the whole character of Jesus; I would conceive that he might have some regard to the character of Jairus, as a ruler of the synagogue; and since he was an honest man, who had entertained a faith in Jesus for working so great a miracle, he by this advice of silence dispensed with his speaking publicly of the miracle, which might have been much to his prejudice, and was not at present absolutely necessary. This I am sure is more consonant to the meekness and goodness of Jesus, upon many other occasions, than any suspicion of fraud or imposture.

'And why,—did he turn the people out of the house before he would raise her?' p. 37. Why, perhaps, partly for the reasons of silence just mentioned. If many had been actually present at the raising her up, they might have been more excited to spread abroad the miracle, and thereby make too great a concourse; which might have given umbrage, and been a handle to his enemies to charge him with innovations in the state. Another reason is this; that no more might thrust into the room where the young woman lay dead, than those he took with him; that there might be no disturbance in the house; that the persons he took along with him, might have no interruption of any kind; that they might be sedate and composed, and attend only to the work he was about to perform before them; and that they might have a near, clear, distinct and full view of it; and that they might afterwards (his disciples especially) report it to others, upon the fullest assurance and conviction.

There were the parents of the young woman, and three of our Saviour's disciples, which are witnesses enough of any action; and being with our Lord six in number, might be as many as could have, in the room where she lay, a clear sight without interrupting each other. Five close witnesses, at full ease, are better than forty witnesses in a crowd and confusion. This action then of our blessed Lord in clearing the house of hired musicians and other people is no exception in the least to this miracle.

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There is still a reflection of Mr. W.'s relating to this miracle to be considered, which he places under one of his former observations; which I passed by then, only that it might be considered here in its proper place. 'And it is not,' says he, p. 27, 'impossible, but the passionate 'screams of the feminine by-standers might fright her into fits, that bore the appearance of 'death; otherwise, why did Jesus turn these inordinate weepers out of the house, before he could 'bring her to her senses again?' If Mr. W. by the 'feminine by-standers' means any persons different from "the minstrels and the people making a noise," [Matt. ix. 23.] which Jesus saw when he came into the house; and would insinuate, that these persons by 'passionate screams might fright her into fits;' this is mere fiction, and contrary to the history of this event. This young woman was near expiring when her father left her, and when he came to Jesus he says she was then at the point of death. This supposition of the father must have been owing to the nature of her case, which he had seen before he left her, and not to any passionate screams which he could know nothing of. Besides, who make passionate screams when people are well, and in no danger? And if made when persons are desperate, would rather be of service than otherwise. These screams then to fright her into fits and an appearance of death, are mere fiction, and an invention of the author against the history.

If by passionate screams Mr. W. intends the lamentations of the minstrels and other people making a noise, whom Jesus found in the house: I should have thought Mr. W. might know very well, that it was not possible they should hurt the young woman; unless they could fright her after she was dead. If her friends had not known she was dead, they would not have suffered these musicians to enter their house, and make lamentations, and put them to charge without any occasion. The music of these minstrels is alone a sufficient proof she was dead. But there had before come some from Jairus's house, which said, "Thy daughter is dead, why troublest thou the master any farther?" Mark v. 35.

I think I have now considered all the objections against the history of raising Jairus's daughter.

'As for the story of the widow of Nain's son,' says Mr. W. p. 37, 38, 'excepting what is 'before observed of the shortness of the time in which he lay dead, and of the unfitness of his 'person to be raised—I have here no more fault to find in the letter of it.' These objections I have spoke to already. But under one of them Mr. W. placed some objections to the circumstances of this story, which I will now consider. He then says, p. 28: 'And who knows but 'Jesus, upon some information or other, might suspect this youth to be in a lethargic state, and 'had a mind to try, if by chafing, &c. he could not do what successfully he did, bring him to his 'senses again: or might not a piece of fraud be concerted between Jesus, a subtil youth, and 'his mother and others; and all the formalities of a death and burial be contrived, that Jesus, 'whose fame for a worker of miracles was to be raised, might here have an opportunity to make 'a show of a grand one. The mourning of the widow, who had her tears at command, and 'Jesus's casual meeting of the corpse upon the road, looks like contrivance to put the better 'face upon the matter. God forbid, that I should suspect there was any fraud of this kind here; 'but of the possibility of it, none can doubt.'

To all this I answer, that the character of Jesus and his doctrine prevents all suspicion of so vile a thing as that of contrivance. His doctrine is as holy and excellent (to say no more) as that which the best men ever taught. He is in his whole behaviour innocent, meek, and undesigning. It is not possible, that such a person should form or countenance a contrivance to deceive or impose upon men.

If he had entertained a thought of contrivance, yet it was not possible he should succeed therein. How was it possible, 'that a piece of fraud might be here concerted between Jesus, a 'subtil youth, and his mother, and others; and all the formalities of a death and burial be con-'trived?' Such a scene could not be acted without a great many persons being in the intrigue (as is apparent from the objection itself) who must have known the fraud. Jesus, who had so many enemies, and those men of power, was the most unlikely of any to succeed herein. Besides, when men form contrivances, they are not of such public open scenes as this was, but are attended with some circumstances of secrecy. When was there ever such a contrivance as this scene is? so public, so open? Jesus entering into a city, many of his disciples with him, and much other people; a public funeral, in day-time, attended with much people of the city!

Moreover, none could be under any temptations to enter into a contrivance with him. For

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Jesus was poor, and subsisted on the voluntary contributions of his friends; and therefore could give no bribes. Men must be some way or other tempted to such an action, because they thereby would incur the censure of the civil magistrate, and expose themselves to some very heavy punishment. If you say here, that Jesus did at last suffer death, and therefore he must certainly have been convicted of some such fault as this: I answer, that it appears from the history of his condemnation that he was innocent; that there was no crime proved against him; and that Pilate himself saw clearly, that it was only out of envy and malice that the chief priests and Pharisees accused him. But not to insist now on this: there were no persons punished, or taken up, as accomplices with Jesus; not his disciples, nor any other persons whatever; which is a demonstration that no imposture was proved upon Jesus, nor suspected concerning him.

As to what is urged in the first place: 'Who knows but Jesus, upon some information or 'other, might suspect this youth to be in a lethargic state, and had a mind to try, if by chafing, '&c. he could not do what successfully he did, bring him to his senses again:' this likewise contains an intimation of a fraud, which, as I said, is absolutely inconsistent with Jesus's character. It also supposes vile and selfish people to be in a combination or correspondence with him, which is entirely inconsistent with the mean and poor circumstances of our blessed Lord in this world. Lastly, all the circumstances of the relation, the tears of the mother (who was the most likely of any to know whether her son was in a lethargy or not) the great number of the people at this funeral; the great company with Jesus (who, if the meeting of the corpse was not casual, must have known it) our Lord's coming up to the bier and touching it, without asking beforehand any questions, concur together to induce us to believe that it was a real miracle. To which might be added, that the company present were fully convinced, it was neither a contrivance, nor a cure performed by a successful and fortunate chafing, but a great and awful miracle: For "there came a fear on all, and they glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up amongst us, and that God hath visited his people," Luke vii. 16.

We may now proceed to the story of Lazarus, which the author calls long, and says, 'Is 'brimful of absurdities. He will single out only three or four of them at present, reserving the 'rest for another opportunity, when the whole story of this miracle will appear to be such a con-'texture of folly and fraud in its contrivance, execution and relation, as is not to be equalled in 'all romantic history,' p. 38. Let us however examine the three or four pretended absurdities. First then, says Mr. W. 'Observe that Jesus is said to have wept and groaned for the death of 'Lazarus. Patience and resignation unto God upon the death of our dearest friends and rela-'tions is what all philosophers have rightly taught; and Jesus, one would think, should have 'been the most heroical example of these graces. A stoical apathy had better become him than 'such childish and effeminate grief,' p. 38.

It does not appear from St. John, that Jesus did weep and groan for the death of Lazarus. He says indeed that "Jesus wept: then said the Jews, behold how he loved him." But it does not follow, that in this they judged right, any more than in some other reflections passed on Jesus at other times; which though the evangelists knew to be false, they do not concern themselves to refute them. But supposing, de did out of love for Lazarus weep for his death; there is nothing in this inconsistent with patience and resignation to God.[a] Nor is there any thing therein weak and effeminate. The ancients, who by many are thought best to have understood human nature, did not think tears unmanful, or disgraceful to a man of true fortitude; as might be amply shown, if needful. For my own part, I never loved stoical principles or dispositions, and I believe Jesus had as tender sentiments as any man. Supposing then the death of Lazarus, and the affection Jesus had for him to have been the cause of these tears, I see no absurdity in them. But there were other things before Jesus of an affecting kind, which might have drawn forth these tears of compassion. He might at that time be affected with the thought of the many afflictions, to which human nature is liable in this state: or he might be affected with the excess of sorrow, which the sisters of Lazarus and other persons then present seem to have showed on this occasion.

As for the groans of Jesus, they were not owing to the death of Lazarus, but to somewhat else, as is very plain from the account; which is this: "Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which

[a] See Dr. Harris's Remarks on the Case of Lazarus, p. 75.

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came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." Here are two just grounds of grief and concern, namely, the excess of sorrow and mourning of Mary and her friends for the loss of Lazarus; and secondly, the tokens which she and the rest gave of want of faith in his power to raise him up after his death. For Mary says to him; "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;" which implies her doubting his power to raise him up: which was a great fault in her, considering the proofs he had before given of his power; considering all the appearances from heaven in his favour, and all the other evidences that had been given that he was the Christ. It was also just matter of concern, that the faith of the people with her was so far from answering the proofs he had given of his power.

The occasion of his last groaning was thus: "And some of them said, Could not this man which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died? Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave." Here also was another sign of want of faith in his power to raise dead Lazarus; which showed, they did not fully believe him to be the Christ, though he had given more than sufficient proof of it.[a] It is also highly probable, that our blessed Lord was now touched with the thought of their continued future unbelief, and the miseries it would bring upon them. As they had not admitted a full conviction of his character from the works they had already seen him do, so he foresaw they would not be convinced neither by the great work he was now going to do in raising Lazarus to life, but would after all persist in their obstinate malice and unbelief. And supposing Jesus to have really done those things which are told of him in the gospels, I think no one can deny, but that the hardness of heart which was in that people was matter of just grief to any wise and good man.

'Secondly, observe,' says the author, p. 40. 'that John says, it was with a loud voice, that 'Jesus called Lazarus forth out of his grave.—Was dead Lazarus deafer than Jairus's daughter, 'or the widow's son?' &c.

It is necessary, when a miracle is wrought for the proof of the character or divine mission of any person, that it appear to be done by him, and not to be a casual thing. It has been common therefore for all the prophets and extraordinary messengers of God to make use of some external action at the same time that they performed a miracle, though that external action was in itself of no real virtue. When the red sea was to be opened to give a passage for the children of Israel, "God said to Moses: Lift up thy rod, and stretch thine hand over the sea, and divide it," Exod. xiv. 16. And when they had passed through, "God said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians," ver. 26. The "stretching the hand" did not divide the sea, but the divine power that accompanied that action. Nevertheless the action was of great use to convince the people, that the dividing or returning of the waters, which immediately followed thereupon, was not a casual natural event, but that God was with Moses their leader. The same thing may be said of any other external actions made use of by Moses, or other ancient prophets. Jesus in like manner, when he intended a miracle, sometimes laid his hands on the person to be cured; or else said, Be thou clean, be thou healed, or used some such other words; that the people might be assured, that the cure was wrought by him, and might believe that God had sent him. For this reason, when he raised Jairus's daughter, "he took her by the hand," and said unto her, "Damsel, arise." And when he raised the widow's son at Nain, "he said; Young man, I say unto thee, arise." And when he raised Lazarus, "he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." There is no absurdity in the loudness of the voice. It well became so solemn and awful an event. When he raised Jairus's daughter, there was no occasion for a loud voice; she being raised to life in the chamber where she lay, where there were no more than five persons present. But at Lazarus's grave a loud voice was not at all improper, when there was by a great multitude of people, that all might know Lazarus was raised to life by Jesus. Whether Jesus spoke with a loud voice when he raised the widow of Nain's son is not related, and we are under no obligation to conjecture. I think, Jesus might speak in what voice he pleased upon such great occasions as these. There can be no cavils formed, but what are at first sight unreasonable.

'Thirdly, because that a miracle should be well guarded against all suspicion of fraud, I 'was thinking to make it an absurdity, that the napkin, before Jesus raised Lazarus, was not

[a] There are other places also, in which our Lord is said to have been angry or grieved; the cause or occasion of which grief or anger appears plainly to be the same with that here assigned by me of his groaning, Mark iii. 5. 'And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts;'—See Mark viii. 12.

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'taken from his face, that the spectators might behold his mortified looks, and the miraculous 'change of his countenance from death unto life,' p. 41 This wise objection is repeated again in the Jew's letter. 'But however this was, they [the spectators] could not but take notice of 'the napkin about his face all the while; which Jesus, to prevent all suspicion of cheat, should 'have first ordered to be taken off, that his mortified countenance might be viewed before the 'miraculous change of it to life was wrought,' p. 51, 52.

The napkin over Lazarus's face is one proof that he was supposed by his friends to be dead, when they buried him. Do not all civilized people out of decency cover the face of a corpse with a napkin, or some such other thing, as well as the other parts of it? If any one had been sent into the sepulchre by Jesus, before he commanded Lazarus forth, it might have given ground of suspicion that the person had been ordered in to see whether Lazarus was alive, and capable to come out of himself, and concur with the command pronounced to come forth. Or it might have been pretended, that he went in to daub his face with some juices that might make him look like a mortified corpse. Any meddling with the body beforehand might have caused some suspicion, but now there was none at all. And the napkin is a circumstance I am very glad St. John did not forget. It very much corroborates other proofs of Lazarus's real death.

'Fourthly and lastly, Observe St. John says, ver. 45, "that many of the Jews, who had seen 'the things that Jesus did here, believed on him; and some of them," ver. 46, who "did not 'believe, went their ways to the pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done in this 'pretended miracle, and how the business was transacted,' p. 41.

It is true, that some went to the pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. But it does not follow that they were persons who did not believe. They did not indeed believe Jesus to be the Christ, as many other Jews did hereupon; but they believed the miracle, and knew it, and went and told the pharisees of it. That these persons told the pharisees of a miracle done by Jesus, is evident from the speeches of the pharisees upon occasion of the report brought them, ver. 47. "Then gathered the chief priests and the pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doth many miracles."

Mr. W. goes on, p. 42. 'Whereupon the chief priests and Pharisees were so far incensed as, 'ver. 53, "from that day forth they took counsel together to put him to death; and ch. xii. 10, 'consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death. Jesus therefore" (and his disciples and 'Lazarus fled for it, for they) ver. 54, "walked no more openly among the Jews, but went 'thence into a country near to the wilderness" (a convenient hiding place) "and there con-'tinued with his disciples;" otherwise in all probability they had been all sacrificed.'

I must take leave to observe, that it is no where said that Lazarus absconded or fled for it: nor is there any account of the Pharisees having at this time any design against Lazarus. Afterwards when Jesus came again to Bethany, we find that Lazarus was then at home. And many of the Jews came thither, "not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted, that they might put Lazarus to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus," John xii. 9, 10, 11. Lazarus therefore did not abscond, but was at Bethany; and the miracle wrought on him was so certain, that many for that reason believed on Jesus. And the reason why the Pharisees consulted that they might put Lazarus to death, was not because any imposture was detected, but because the miracle was too clear to be denied, and induced great numbers of the Jews, even followers of the Pharisees, to go away from them, and believe in Jesus.

But this retirement of Jesus with his disciples into a country near the wilderness is judged so mighty an objection, that it is repeated again in the Jew's letter. 'Why did Jesus and his 'disciples, with Lazarus, run away and abscond upon it?—Is there not here a plain sign of guilt 'and fraud? Men that have God's cause, truth and power on their side, never want courage and 'resolution to stand to it,' p. 44.

The judgments of men are surely very unfair and unequal. When any of the first Christians are observed to have been too forward in exposing themselves, they are represented as a company of mad men, and hot-headed enthusiasts. Jesus now for avoiding a dangre is taxed with want of 'courage and resolution;' nay his retirement for only a very short time is termed, 'a plain sign of guilt and fraud.' Thus the desire of serving a present low purpose prevails over

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all the regards of justice and equity. 'So hard is it, (as Socrates [a] observed) though you are 'free from all fault to escape unfair judges.' "But wisdom is justified of her children."

It might be sufficient here to remind men of Christ's returning in a short time to Bethany again, and appearing publicly at Jerusalem, and teaching in the temple. But let us at present observe only this history of his raising Lazarus from the grave. When Jesus heard of the sickness of Lazarus, he was in the country beyond Jordan, John x. 40, and when he proposed to his disciples "to go into Judea again," they remembering the attempts of the Jews against him, endeavour all they can to divert him from the journey. "His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?" chap. xi. 8. Jesus then argues with them, that they need not apprehend any danger to him as yet. "These things said he, and after that saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep," ver. 11. They from thence take occasion to argue again, that then their journey to Bethany was not needful: "Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well." After that he tells them that Lazarus was dead, and declares his resolution to go to Bethany: "nevertheless let us go unto him." Whereupon Thomas filled with a kind of indignation [b] that Jesus should have no more concern for himself nor them, than to expose them all to certain death, but at the same time sensible of his duty to follow him, says to his fellow-disciples: "Let us also go that we may die with him," ver. 16.

So that our blessed Lord, when he was in a place of safety, resolved to come to Bethany near Jerusalem, for the sake of Lazarus: and herein showed great courage and resolution. And what is there, I pray, blameable in his retiring again to some distance from Jerusalem, when he had performed the business for which he came into its neighbourhood?

CHAP. II.

Answer to the Jewish Rabbi's Letter.

We are now come to the letter of Mr. W.'s Jewish Rabbi, whom Mr. W. calls his friend, and says his letter 'consists of calm and sedate reasoning,' p. 55. I on the other hand can see no reason in it. But the reader shall not need to rely upon my judgment. Therefore I will transcribe some parts of it, and then make some remarks. The argument of the letter is, that the story of Lazarus's being raised is an imposture; or else the Jews could not have been so wicked, as to be on that account provoked against Jesus and Lazarus.

'If there had been an indisputable miracle wrought in Lazarus's resurrection, why were the 'chief priests and Pharisees so incensed upon it, as to take counsel to put Jesus and Lazarus to 'death for it?' p. 43.

The reason is very evident; because that by reason of it "many of the Jews went away," deserted the proud Pharisees, "and believed on Jesus," John xii. 10.

'If,' says he, 'historians can parallel this story of the malignity of the Jews toward Jesus 'and Lazarus upon such a real miracle with thing [things] equally barbarous and inhuman in 'any other sect and nation; we will acknowledge the truth of it against our own nation: or if 'such inhumanity, abstractedly considered, be at all agreeable to the conceptions any one can 'form of human nature, in the most uncivilized and brutish people, we will allow our ancestors 'in this case, to have been that people.—And he promises to make it out as foolish and 'wicked an imposture as ever was contrived and transacted in the world—that it is no wonder 'the people by an unanimous voice, called for the releasement of Barabbas, a robber and 'murderer, before Jesus,' p. 46, 53, 54.

[a] Χαλεπον δε και αναμαρτητως τι ποιησαντας με αγνωμονι κριτη περιτυχειν. Apud Xenophon. Memor. l. 2.

[b] Or perhaps, there was no indignation in his mind, but only a warm affection, which disposed him to go with Jesus, and to call upon the other disciples to do so likewise, whatever the danger was.

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The demand made of a parallel of the malignity of the Jews against Jesus, upon such a real miracle, is very idle, because there never was such a public miracle done by any other for so pure a doctrine. But if this Jew or any one else will produce an instance of such a miracle done by any one, who also taught the same spiritual heavenly doctrine that Jesus did, and nothing else; and who conversed and taught as publicly as Jesus did; and spoke the truth to all without fear or favour: I will show he had an ignominious death, or else wondrous escapes and deliverances by manifest interpositions of Divine Providence.

But though an instance of equal malignity cannot be shown, because there is no other character equal to our Saviour's in innocence of life and greatness of works; yet the Jewish nation will afford an instance, which I am very sorry is so near a parallel. Moses was the greatest prophet, and meekest man, they ever had among them, except Jesus, and they often murmured against him. "And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me," Exod. xvii, 4. When they should have gone to have taken possession of the land of Canaan, "All the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron. All the congregation bade stone them with stones," Numb. xiv. 2—10. that is, Moses and Aaron, Caleb and Joshua, or at least these two, the only persons that stood by Moses, and his brother.

This people were to a man obliged to Moses, who had brought them up out of a state of servitude. Nor had they any just ground of complaint against him, whilst in the wilderness, for God says: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings," Exod. xix. 4. The blessings Moses proposed were far more agreeable to carnal minds (such as the Jews and most other men's are) than those promised by Jesus. He engaged to raise them to a state of independency in a land flowing with milk and honey. The time set for this event according to Divine promise was now come. And he had performed many great miracles before them, and yet they rebelled continually against God and this his servant. Nor did any of all this congregation, except Caleb and Joshua, believe God, as Moses tells them expressly. Deut. ix. 23, 24. They are called by the Psalmist a "stubborn and rebellious generation," Ps. lxxviii. 8. "They believed not for all his wondrous works," ver. 32. Not that they disbelieved the works themselves: they knew them, but though they saw the works of God, they were not obedient.

"Thou knowest," says Aaron to Moses, "that this people is set upon mischief," Exod. xxxii. 22. As they were then, so they continued to be; and slew the prophets which God sent to them. They are upon record in their own writings as the most obstinate of all people, Ezek. iii. 5, 6. They are said to have "changed God's judgments into wickedness more than the nations," ch. v. 6. One would think these, and many other such things, were recorded on purpose to prevent such an objection as we have now before us; or to help us to answer it, if any should be so unreasonable as to make it.

Why should it be thought strange that this people, who would have stoned Moses, and who slew many other prophets, should also conspire against Jesus? especially considering that they abounded now as much as ever with all kinds of the worst wickedness, except idolatry; (if we may credit Josephus, and other writers of this nation) and were now disappointed in their fondest expectations of worldly power and splendour. I will transcribe here an answer of Origen to a like objection of Celsus, proposed in the person of a Jew. 'Well then, sirs, how will 'you (says Origen)' answer such questions as these, if put to you by us? Which are in your 'opinion the greatest miracles? those which were wrought in Egypt, and in the wilderness? 'or those which we say were wrought among you by Jesus? If in your opinion those are greater 'than these latter: is it not hence apparent, that according to your custom, you may despise 'the less, who disbelieved the greater? since you think those ascribed to Jesus less than those

[a] Το, τι ζηλεσθε, ω ουτοι, προς τας πευσεις ημων αποκρινεσθαι; ποιαι δυναμεις μειζες, οσον επι υμετερα υπολημψει ειναι υμιν φαινονται, αι εν Αιγυπτω και τη ερημω, η α εφαμεν ημεις πεποιηκεναι τον Ιησουν παρ' υμιν; ει μεν δε εκειναι μειζες τουτων καθ' υμας εισι· πως εκ αυτοθεν δεικνυται, ότι κατα το ηθος των τοις μειζοσιν απιστησαντων εοικι και το των ηττονων καταφρονειν; τουτο γαρ υπολαμβανεται περι ων λεγομεν περι Ιησου· ει δε ουσαι λεγονται περι του Ιησου ταις αναγεγραμμεναις υπο Μωυσεως, τι ξενον απηντησε λαω και αμφοτερας τας αρχας των πραγματων απιστουντι; αρχη μεν γαρ νομοθεσιας επι Μωυσεως ην, εν η τα αμαρτηματα των απιστων και των αμαρτανοντων υμων αναγεγραπται. αρχη δε νομοθεσιας και διαθηκης δευτερας κατα τον Ιησουν ημιν γεγονεναι ομολογειται. και μαρτυρειτε δι' ων τω Ιησου απιστειτε, ότι υιοι εστε εν τη ερημω απιστησαντων ταις θειαις επιφανειαις. Origen. contr. Cels. I. 2. p. 206, 207.

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'former. But if those, which are related of Jesus are equal to those written by Moses: 'is it any thing strange, that the same people should be equally unbelieving upon both oc- 'casions? For the beginning of the law was by Moses: and in that are recorded the trans- 'gressions of the unbelievers and sinners among you. And the beginning of the second law 'and covenant is allowed to have been given unto us by Jesus. And by your unbelief in Jesus 'you make it appear, that ye are the children of those who did not believe the divine appearances 'in the wilderness.'

Any man may perceive, that a prophet is the most unpopular of all characters. For he is to "cry aloud and spare not; to lift up his voice like a trumpet," Isaiah lviii. 1. and show men of all ranks their transgressions and their sins. "Moses at first supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them," Acts vii. 25. But when he endeavoured only to reconcile two of them, and "said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?" what a smart reply did he meet with? "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?" Exod. ii. 13, 14. These were his apprehensions then; but when he was forty years older, and knew the world better, and God appeared to him and told him, he would send him to bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt: after divers fine excuses, which are not accepted of, he in a modest way positively refuses to go. "And he said, O Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send," Exod. iv. 13. Nor does he yield, till the anger of the Lord is kindled against him. So hazardous and difficult was this office, that God sometimes promises a prophet, as a special favour and a most necessary qualification, together with a commission, boldness of countenance to execute it. "As an adamant harder than flint," says God to Ezekiel, "have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed," Ezek. iii. 9. And Jeremiah he made a "defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land," Jerem. i. 18.

It is a very unjust way of judging: such an one suffered, or was hated and opposed; therefore he was a wicked man, or an impostor. If we will pass a judgment on men, we should examine their conduct, as well as the treatment they meet with: otherwise we are in danger of being unjust to the memory of some of the best men that ever were. Solomon says, "A just man falleth [into trouble] seven times, and riseth up again," Prov. xxiv. 16. And his father David: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all," Ps. xxxiv. 19. Many were the afflictions of our blessed Saviour, but he was delivered out of them all, if ever man was; having been soon raised up from the grave, and seated at the right hand of God.

Solomon says again: "An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright in the way, is abomination to the wicked," Prov. xxix. 27. Which last observation is confirmed by divers heathen writers of good knowledge in human nature: 'That a man can no sooner be 'an enemy to all vice, and walk in the ways of virtue, but he becomes the object of hatred.'[a] Socrates who had been pronounced by the oracle of Apollo the wisest man, and who has since had almost universally the character of the best man among the Greeks,[b] was put to death by his countrymen the Athenians, a people more renowned for civility and good humour than the Jews. He was always apprehensive of suffering, and sensible of the danger he incurred by opposing the evil practices of men. He goes so far as to tell the Athenians:[c] 'It is impossible for any 'man to be safe among them, or any where else, who honestly and courageously opposes vice 'and injustice.' He says also that he had chosen a private life as best suited to answer his design; and that if he had been in the magistracy, and taken the course he had done of instructing and admonishing all people, he had not lived so long. And Cicero[d] observed in his

[a] Si quis vitiorum omnium inimicus rectum iter vitæ cœpit insistere, primum propter morum differentiam odium habet. Quis enim potest probare diversa? Petron. Arbiter, laudat. a Grot. ad Matt. x. 22.

Και γαρ και μισενται, ελεγχονΐες αυτων τας αμαθιας. Lucian. Contemplant. V. I. p. 357. edit. Amst.

[b] Και τον αριστον των Ἑλληνων λαζων ὑποθεσιν [Αριστοφανης] ενδρα τοις τε αλλοις θεοις φιλον, και δη και μαλιστα τῳ Απολλωνι. Ælian. Var. His. l. 2. c. 13.

[c] Ευ γαρ ισθι, ω Αθηναιοι, ει εγω παλαι επεχειρησα πραττειν τα πολιτικα πραγμαΐα, παλαι αν απολωλειν.—και μοι μη αχθεσθε λεγοντι τ' αληθη. ου γαρ εστιν ὁστις ανθρωπων σωθησεται, ουτε ὑμιν ουτε αλλῳ ουδενι πληθει γνησιως εναντιουμενος, και διακωλυων πολλα αδικα και παρανομα εν τῃ πολει γιγνεσθαι. Plat. Apolog. Socrat. p. 31. F.

[d] Animi autem medicina nec tam desiderata sit,—nec tam multis grata et probata, pluribus etiam suspecta & invisa. Tusc. Q. l. 3. init.

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time, that philosophy, which proposed to cure the minds of men, was suspected and hated by the most, as a dangerous thing. Some sovereign princes have lost their lives in attempts of reformation. Many indeed are the instances of the unjust judgments of the most. A peaceable prince, who protects the estates, the commerce, the persons and consciences of his subjects, is barely beloved: a conqueror is adored; though he needlessly hazards the lives of his own subjects, and violates toward his neighbours all the laws of nations, and all the laws of honour and humanity.

But I am ashamed to give this argument its full force. I little expected to have ever seen this objection seriously produced against the miracles, or any other branch of the history of the New Testament, and called 'calm and sedate reasoning,' p. 55. An apologist for Christianity might have brought it forth and stated it, to adorn his triumph, after a confutation of other more plausible objections; but for any seriously to mention the enmity of the Jews against Jesus, as an objection against him, can be owing to nothing, in my opinion, but strange ignorance or prejudice, or a most contemptuous opinion of all the reason and observation of mankind.

Let us examine another passage in the Jew's letter. 'Such a manifest miracle, let it be 'wrought for what end and purpose we can possibly imagine, would strike men with awe and reve-'rence, and none could hate and persecute the author of the miracle; lest he who could raise 'the dead, should exert his power against themselves, and either wound or smite them dead 'with it. For which reason, the resurrection of Lazarus, on the certain knowledge of our an-'cestors, was all fraud, or they would have reverenced and adored the power of him that did it,' p. 48. And more such stuff has this Jew again and again to this same purpose.

I must therefore remind him of some examples in the books of the Old Testament. In 1 Kings xvii. is the history of Elijah's raising the widow's son. In the next chapter he works a great miracle at the altar, and after that obtaineth rain. Nevertheless it is said, chap. xix. 1, 2. "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah," and solemnly swears she would destroy him, "saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time." Whereupon Elijah absconds, and in a prayer to God he says, "They seek his life to take it away." In the twenty-second chapter is mention of another prophet of the Lord, by name Micajah, of whom Ahab says to Jehosaphat in plain terms: "I hate him."

Ahaziah, another king of Israel, fell "down through a lattice in his upper chamber, and was sick," 2 Kings i. Nevertheless, in this condition, (such stubbornness is there in the heart of man!) he sends officers, one after another, to Elijah, requiring him to come to him. Elisha also, successor of Elijah, raised a person to life and wrought divers other miracles, 2 Kings iv. Notwithstanding this, Jehoram, another king of Israel, says: ch. vi. 31. "God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day."

One story more to our purpose out of the Jewish writings, 2 Kings vi. 11—13, but wherein a foreigner is concerned. The king of Syria is at war with Israel. Elisha informs the king of Israel of all his enemy's steps. The king of Syria is amazed, and complains to his servants that they discover his secrets: "Will ye not show me, which of us is for the king of Israel? and one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king; but Elisha the prophet, that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber." This king of Syria believed what his servant said, otherwise he had not concerned himself about Elisha. But it follows there: "And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him,—Behold he is in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses and chariots, and a great host, and they came by night, and compassed him about." So that it is plain, miracles do not always fill wicked men with such awe and reverence, but that they can still hate and persecute, and break forth into rage against the authors of them.

This Jew says, p. 49: 'That it is certain, according to Christian commentators, that some 'of them did not believe the miracle.' Again he says, p. 51: 'It is plain from the story in 'John, that there was a dispute amongst the by-standers at Lazarus's resurrection, whether it 'was a real miracle or not.' I presume to say: this is a false account. It is not plain, that there was any dispute among the by-standers, whether it was a real miracle. It is plain those

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people, who went to the pharisees, told them of a real miracle. And the pharisees, when met in council, say: "What do we? for this man doth many miracles."

Nor do I know, that any Christian commentators say,[a] that 'some of them did not believe the miracle.' They did not believe in Jesus indeed, but they knew the miracle. "Many of the Jews that came to Mary," says St. John, "believed on him." But some of them (which were present, who did not believe in Jesus notwithstanding the miracle) "went their ways to the Pharisees." This is the sense of the place. So the Jews in the wilderness did not believe God, but no Jew sure will say, they disputed whether the things done by Moses were miraculous.

'Perhaps,' says this Jew, 'they discovered some fragments of the food, that for four days 'in the cave, he had subsisted on.' There is no ground here for a perhaps. How should a man take any food, "who was bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and whose face was bound about with the" so often mentioned "napkin?"

'As it is plain,' (says the Jew again) 'from the story in John, that there was a dispute among 'the by-standers at Lazarus's resurrection, whether it was a real miracle; so it is the opinion of 'us Jews, which is of the nature of a tradition, that the chief priests and civil magistrates of 'Bethany, for the better determination of the dispute, required that Jesus should repeat the 'miracle upon another person, there lately dead and buried. But Jesus declining this test of his 'power, the whole multitude questioned the resurrection of Lazarus. And this was one reason 'of that vehement and universal outcry and demand, at Jesus's trial, for his crucifixion,' p. 50, 52.

There is no reason to believe, that this is the opinion of the Jews; but supposing it to be so, it is groundless. And here a present opinion is advanced into a tradition. This tradition is set up against authentic history, written by witnesses and other well-informed persons, who lived near the event. Is that a good cause that needs such a defence? will any man of sense and reason engage, in any other case, in so desperate a cause?

There are innumerable proofs in the evangelists, not only that the raising of Lazarus was a real miracle, but also that the Pharisees knew it to be so. Their not putting Lazarus or any other person to death, as an accomplice with Jesus, is demonstration that this and the other miracles of Jesus were known to be real, and not impostures. It is apparent from the trial of Jesus, that the truth of his miracles could not be called in question. If they had, the evangelists, who have recorded so many charges against Jesus, and so many spiteful, scurrilous reproaches on him, would not have omitted this.

CHAP. III.

That these three Miracles are well circumstanced.

I AM now to show, that the histories of these three miracles are well circumstanced, and have in them the marks and tokens of credibility. But I have here very little to say. Scarce any thing can be added to the perspicuity of the evangelists' several relations.

I shall however make two or three general observations, and then go over the particulars of the relation of each miracle.

[a] Grot. ad ver. 46. Impios hos fuisse necesse est; quod genus hominum ne conspectâ quidem mortuorum resurrectione resipiscere solet. Luc. xvi. 31. Omnia enim potius, etiam absurdissima, comminiscuntur, quam sua commoda aut hominum gratiam (quam istos venatos apparet) amittant. Et ad ver 47. 'Multa signa facit.' Adeo excœcati erant invidiâ animi, ut, quod argumentum esse debuerat, quo ipsi crederent, eo in ipsius perniciem incitarentur.

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SECTION I.

The general observations I would mention are these:

1. There are in these relations proper circumstances of time and place, and the names and characters of persons. Of the miracle on Jairus's daughter, the time and place are sufficiently specified by St. Mark and St. Luke. It was soon after his crossing the sea of Galilee after Jesus had cured the men possessed with devils in the country of the Gergesenes, "And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him, and he was nigh unto the sea. And behold there cometh one of the rulers," &c. Mark v. 21. "And it came to pass that when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him. And behold there came a man," &c. Luke viii. 40.

The character of the person on whom the miracle was performed is particularly described. She is the daughter of a ruler of a synagogue, whose name was Jairus. Matthew says, ch. ix. 18. "There came a certain ruler." Mark, "Behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name." Luke, "Behold there came a man named Jairus, and he was the ruler of the synagogue." And by Mark she is said to have been of the "age of twelve years."

Of the next miracle, related by Luke only, it is said to have been done the day after the cure of the Centurion's servant at Capernaum. The place is the city of Nain, the person is the only son of a widow there. Luke vii. 11, 12. "And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

Of the last miracle related by St. John only, the person on whom it is said to have been done is Lazarus, of the town of Bethany, nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off, brother of Mary and Martha; friend of Jesus and his disciples; and on occasion of the death of Lazarus, Jesus came up from beyond Jordan to Bethany, and then retired into a city called Ephraim. Moreover it appears to have been done not long before our Saviour's death.

This specifying of time, place, and names or characters of persons, is an argument of a real story and not a fiction: for, if it had been a fiction, it might have been easily discovered.

2. These miracles were done at the usual place of the residence of those persons on whom they were performed; a much greater security, in this case, against cheat and imposture, than if they had been done on travellers, who were strangers in the places where such things are acted on them.

3. They were all very public miracles, as is apparent from the relation. It may be difficult to say, where there was the greatest concourse; but I am inclined to think, that the company at Lazarus's resurrection was the fewest; and also, that the company which attended Jesus to the house of Jairus was the greatest concourse of the three. There were not indeed so many present at speaking the word, when his daughter was restored to life. Nor could the young woman's corpse be brought out of her chamber, and placed before the house, in order to raise her there before all the people, without ostentation; which is entirely unbecoming the character of Jesus; but all the numerous company then attending our Lord had full evidence of her death, and of her restoration to life, as has been shown in part already, and may farther appear presently.

SECTION II.

We will now go over the particulars of the relation of each miracle, from which it will appear that these persons had been dead, and were raised to life by Jesus.

Jairus, ruler of a synagogue, came to Jesus and "worshipped him;" or as Mark, and Luke, "fell down at his feet, saying, My daughter is even now dead," or, "at the point of death, but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live."

It is not reasonable to suppose, that a ruler of a synagogue would come to Jesus, and ask him to heal his daughter in so earnest a manner, and with such signs of high esteem and respect, and that before great numbers of people, unless his daughter's case was desperate, and past all hopes of remedy in an ordinary way. It was dishonourable to pay any respect to Jesus.

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There were few or none of Jairus's character who publicly owned him for the Christ. His application to him must be very offensive to his brethren; and therefore we may be assured, he had no prospect of help for his daughter any other way but this.

Moreover, the manner in which he comes to Jesus, shows an uncommon concern and earnestness. While Jesus is speaking in public, he comes and falls down at his feet, and "besought him greatly—I pray thee come and lay thy hands on her."

The expressions he uses concerning his daughter, represent her to be in the utmost extremity; so that she must be near expiring when he left her.

Upon his earnest entreaty "Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples," Matthew: and much "people followed him and thronged him," Mark: and from St. Luke it appears, that a "multitude thronged and pressed him." From all the three evangelists, who relate this matter, it is plain, that when Jairus came to Jesus, much people was round about him. The request of Jairus, so noted a person, to come and heal his daughter, would also doubtless increase the number of people that were before gathered together about him. It was impossible for Jesus, surrounded by so great a crowd, to go in great haste to Jairus's house.

Moreover all these three evangelists are agreed, that as Jesus was going along, there came behind him a woman who had an infirmity of twelve years standing, who touched the hem of his garment and was made whole. St. Matthew assures us also, that Jesus had then some discourse with this woman: St. Mark and St. Luke, that Jesus perceiving virtue to have gone out of him, stood still, looked round him, asked who touched him. The disciples then express their wonder that he should ask such a question. The woman tells her case at length before him and all the people; and Jesus bids her go away in peace. This affair took up considerable time; and if Jairus's daughter lay dying when he left her, she may be supposed to be worse by this time, if not quite dead.

And accordingly, we are assured by Mark and Luke, "that while he yet spake" with this woman, there came one or more persons from Jairus's house, saying, "Thy daughter is dead, why troublest thou the Master any farther?" This person came from Jairus's house, and very probably had been dispatched away by some of those who attended on the young woman. Would any of his servants or friends come with such a melancholy story to Jairus, that his daughter had died while he was abroad, if they had not known for certain that she was dead?

By all these things we know, that Jairus's daughter died of sickness that made gradual advances; not of a sudden fit, or fright, or any thing like it. She lay dying when Jairus left the house. Some persons come to him, and tell him that she was dead, and dissuade him from troubling the Master any farther: whereas, if she had only had something like a fit, it had been most unreasonable to dissuade Jairus from troubling Jesus any farther.

Let us go on: when Jesus came into the ruler's house, he saw "the minstrels and the people making a noise," Matthew: "He seeth the tumult and them that wept greatly," Mark: "And all wept and bewailed her," Luke. Here were friends, and public hired musicians, weeping and bewailing the young woman. They knew therefore that she was dead; she had been dead some time, or else these minstrels had not begun their lamentations.

Jesus says: "Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth." Whereupon, say all the three evangelists, "They laughed him to scorn." So sure were these persons that she was dead and not in a sleep; as they understood Jesus to say.

Jesus put forth out of the house these public mourners, and other strangers. When the disciples and all the people saw these minstrels come out, they had farther evidence hereby of the death of the young woman.

Jesus having removed all strangers, that the house might be quiet, enters into the room where the young woman lay, taking with him the parents, "the father and mother of the maiden, and three of his own disciples;" a sufficient number of persons to attest any fact; yet not so many, but that they might all have a clear and distinct view of the thing: the properest persons of any to be admitted; the father and the mother, as best knowing the young woman's case, the most unwilling of any to admit a deceit, and to take another person, a stranger who had not died, instead of their own daughter; three of his own disciples, who were to be witnesses of his works, and who could not have been persuaded to undertake the difficult work of preaching the gospel after their Master's removal without good proof of his divine mission; who might also assure the other disciples of this thing from their own sight.

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These five persons Jesus took along with him; and now the three disciples saw the dead corpse of the young woman, whom her parents and friends knew to be dead before.

And "he took her by the hand, and said, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway, and walked." Upon Jesus's taking hold of her hand, and bidding her arise, she immediately arose. It was therefore evidently the effect of that power that accompanied his word. She also walked, so that life and strength were at once conveyed. He also "commanded to give her meat." And then all who ministered food to her, and saw her eat, were witnesses of her perfect recovery.

They who were present were convinced it was a miracle. "Her parents were astonished," says St. Mark: "And they were astonished with a great astonishment," says St. Luke, meaning, it is likely, the three disciples as well as the parents. Lastly, St. Matthew says, "The fame hereof went abroad into all that land." So that whether the parents, and the three disciples present, were silent, according to Christ's direction, or not, the thing was known; many were persuaded of the miracle, and spoke of it. And indeed, the circumstances of her death were so public, that all who saw her alive again, though they were not in the room at the time she was raised, must know the miracle.

The three disciples present at this transaction were afterwards the most forward and courageous of any in declaring Jesus to be the Son of God, in the midst of dangers; whereas they must have been the most backward of all men in giving him this character, if they had perceived this affair to be any thing but a real miracle.

The next story is that of the widow of Nain's son. "Jesus went into a city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him," Luke vii. 11; that is, of his followers, beside the twelve, and much other people. "Now when he came nigh unto the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out." This meeting of the corpse must have been casual, without any concerted design between Jesus and any people of Nain. For our Lord's life, during the course of his ministry, was very public. This event happened in a very noted part of it. He had but the day before cured the Centurion's servant at Capernaum. At this instant there were many of his disciples and other people with him. There could not have been any agreement transacted between him and any at Nain so privately but it must have been known.

The dead man carried out was the "only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her." As sure as persons do not carry men forth to burial till they are dead, so sure are we that this was a dead corpse. The person was not one who had no friends to take care of him. He was the only son of a widow, therefore her only support, her husband being dead.

"There were much people of the city with her," her neighbours. Could she have concerted a fraud for carrying out her only child, if he had been alive! It is observable, that there were "much people of the city with her," which is no unusual thing at the funeral of a person who leaves behind him so fond a relation as a widow-mother. But had there been any fraud, it is very unlikely that she should have carried out her son with much company of that place. She would have contrived some pretence to excuse their company at this time. Or rather, she would have said nothing of the matter to any one, but carried him out privately to burial as dead, without any previous notice. This "much people of the city" with the mother, ruins all objections that can be raised.

If it had been said: it might be the contrivance of the young man, a subtle youth, without the knowledge of his mother: I answer, that is impossible. If he had been abroad in a strange country, he might have contrived such a thing with his comrades; but it is impossible he should transact such a matter in his mother's house without her knowledge. Would a widow let her only son be carried to burial out of her own house, without knowing whether he was dead or not?

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." Jesus, before he had seen the corpse, without asking any questions, knowing the power he had of raising the dead to life, bid her forbear weeping; thereby intimating in a modest way, that she should soon see her son, whose death was the cause of her sorrow, restored to life.

"And he came and touched the bier (and they that bare him stood still) and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise; and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak: and he delivered him to his mother." Presently, upon the voice of Jesus commanding him to arise, he sat up,

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and began to speak. The tokens of life, strength and vigour, appeared immediately upon the command of Jesus. His life was manifestly known hereby to be the effect of the power accompanying the word of Jesus.

This was reckoned a miracle by the numerous company present, before whom it was publicly done; and they reported it to others, for it follows: "And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited his people. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about."

We will now take a view of the last story of this kind. "Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and Martha—Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." Hereby we learn, that Lazarus did not die suddenly; that he was not taken off by a fit, but by a sickness which made gradual advances. His sisters sent to Jesus, "He whom thou lovest is sick;" supposing that out of his affection for Lazarus, he would come to Bethany; and hoping also that he might possibly get thither before he was dead. That Lazarus was dangerously sick, is evident not only from the substance of the message, but from their sending a messenger so far, and also from their not coming either of them to Christ. It is also hence apparent, that there could be no fraud and contrivance. The matter is not secretly transacted between Lazarus, his sisters, and Jesus, but here is a messenger employed. Moreover, if they had had any thought of such a great design in hand, as making a pretence of raising up Lazarus, though not dead, some one of these sisters would have come herself. Nothing but real sickness could have kept the sisters at home, and from coming to Jesus. The thought of making a pretence of so great a miracle as raising a dead man to life would certainly have obliged one of the nearest relations to come in person to him, who was to have the honour of so mighty a work.

Jesus staid some time in the place where he was, after the receiving a message of Lazarus's sickness. He receives no more messages; a sign there was no longer any need of his coming, and that Lazarus was recovered; or else that he was in such a state, that his friends had no longer hopes of any benefit from Jesus.

But at length Jesus resolves to go into Judea, and sets out with his disciples for Bethany, though it was nigh to Jerusalem, where the Jews had lately sought his life: a sure sign of the consciousness of his innocence and integrity. Had it been thought necessary to concert a pretended miracle between Jesus and these persons: Lazarus might have come to the country beyond Jordan, and a death and a resurrection might have been contrived there. None would have chosen Bethany for the scene of a pretended miracle at this time; so near the fiercest enemies, so near the great council of the Jews. If a miracle had been contrived at Bethany, it would not have been upon an inhabitant of the place, a well-known person, but some stranger purposely arrived there by accident, but who should have no occasion to come thither again. What reward, what sum of money could be sufficient to induce a well-known person, inhabitant of Bethany, so near Jerusalem, to enter into a combination with Jesus, to be the person on whom an imposture of this kind should be acted?

"Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.—And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house." Hence it is evident, that Lazarus's death and burial were public things. Moreover these sisters did not go to Jesus: Martha does not go, till she hears Jesus is near the house; and Mary stays still at home; all arguments of true sorrow, and that there was no contrivance.

"Then saith Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." How natural expressions of sorrow and concern! Did this person, who spoke these words, know her brother was alive still, and only feigned to be dead? Impossible. "But I know, that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." More words, that demonstrate, they were not in any concerted design of feigning a miracle. After some more discourse between her and Jesus, she went her way, and "called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come and calleth for thee."

As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. The Jews then which were with her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her; saying,

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She goeth unto the grave, to weep there." Mary's grief was real, in the opinion of all these persons, who might, one would think, have known it to be counterfeit, if it had been so.

"Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." She had no more thought of seeing her brother raised presently by Jesus, than her sister Martha had.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." Here are in this joint weeping of Mary and her friends the token of a deep sorrow, arising from the death of Lazarus, and a despair of ever seeing him again, before the resurrection at the last day. Their grief so far exceeded the bounds it ought to have done, when Jesus, who had already given such demonstrations of his power, was with them, that he "groaned in spirit, and was troubled."

Ver. 34. "And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see." Jesus himself first makes the proposal of going toward the sepulchre by asking the question; "where they had laid him." There appear no where any intimations that they had hopes of seeing Lazarus alive again.

They go toward the sepulchre, ver. 38. "Jesus—cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he has been dead four days." Need I here remark, that these are the words of one, who knew her brother was dead? She expresses herein such a want of all hopes of seeing her brother alive again, that Jesus reproves her, and says: "Said I not unto thee, That if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?"

Now with what deliberation, and with what solemnity of address to the Father, does Jesus proceed to this great work, that the minds of all the company might be attentive, and observe!

Ver. 41—44. "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lift up his eyes and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

There is no occasion for remarks here: he who was dead came out with burial clothes upon him, with all the tokens of a corpse buried by his friends; so bound, that in a natural course he was not able to move; and he was ordered to be unloosed by others, not being able to help himself; that all might see the tokens of life, strength and vigour, by the actions of walking.

Is there any reason to doubt after this view of this relation, whether this was a real miracle; and whether they who were present must not be sure it was so, and report it as such, as John has done?

But we will proceed a little farther. All present are represented as persuaded of it. For "many of the Jews, which came to Mary and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him:" that is, believed him to be the Messias. "But some of them," being wicked malicious men, "went to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done." And the Pharisees considering the greatness of this work, and that such things as these would tend to bring "all men," great numbers of people, to believe on him, "from that day forth they took counsel together to put him to death," ver. 53.

That this thing was no imposture, but a real miracle, appears finally from hence; that not long after this, (by which time the Pharisees might have inquired into the matter, and got evidence of the imposture, if any could be had) Jesus comes publicly to Jerusalem, enters into the temple, teaches there boldly from day to day, spends several days at Jerusalem, and in the neighbourhood, at Bethany itself, the place of this action; and lives all this time in the most public open manner at the near approach of one of the Jewish principal festivals, where there was a general resort thither from all parts. He celebrates moreover this great feast with his disciples in Jerusalem. And supper being over, he goes into a garden, an usual place of retirement, with his disciples: whither the officers of the high priest come to apprehend him, to whom he voluntarily surrenders himself. Whereupon he is examined and tried before the council, and before Pilate, but not one imposture of any kind is proved or charged upon him.

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SECTION III.

I MIGHT conclude here, but I am willing to add a few observations on the propriety and beauty of our Lord's action, and of the evangelists' relations.

St. Matthew informs us, that when the ruler came to Jesus, he was discoursing to the people. "While Jesus spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler to him—saying, My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay thy hand upon her.—And Jesus arose and followed him," Matt. ix. 18.

Jesus is always ready, never unwilling or unprepared for the performance of any good work: but immediately hearkens to the call, and proceeds without delay from good and useful discourse to great and useful works.

Not only the disciples, but those also that were hearing him, go along with him: "And much people followed him, and thronged him," Mark v. 24. As he is going, a woman in the crowd, who had a long and grievous infirmity, secretly touches him and is healed. "Jesus, perceiving that virtue had gone out of him," instead of omitting the notice hereof, and hasting along to Jairus's house, lest the case should become too desperate and beyond his reach; but knowing that all things were in his power, stops, turns him about, and asks, "Who touched me?"

How sedate is his temper! He is not exalted with the thought of the honour done him by a ruler of a synagogue, who had earnestly besought him to heal his daughter. He is not in any haste to proceed to his house, lest the opportunity of showing his power in the family of a ruler in Israel should be lost: but stands still, inquires who touched him; hears the poor woman tell her case, and confirms her cure, by bidding her "go in peace."

Jesus was now going to Jairus's house, whose daughter was by this time dead. And there was no way left for him to help this ruler; and perform his request, of laying his hand on his daughter, that she might live, without raising her up from the dead. As he is going to this surprising awful action of giving life to the dead, virtue issues forth from him through his garment, and heals a long and obstinate disease. How great is Jesus here! How transporting the idea the mind forms of him!

When he came "to the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and" others "making a noise, he said unto them: Give place, for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth," Matt. ix. 28. What modesty! what humility! "They laughed him to scorn," supposing him to speak of natural sleep. Yet he corrects not their mistake. Nothing can draw out from him any word that has the appearance of boast or vanity.

I shall by and by give a like instance of modesty in St. John's history of the miracle of Lazarus. He who reads such passages as these in these evangelists, the one originally of so sordid an employment as that of a publican, the other an illiterate fisherman, may be assured, they did not invent, but that they drew some real character: there not being, I believe, another such example of modesty to be found in any author ancient or modern; how well soever skilled in historical facts, or however renowned for greatness of genius and fruitfulness of fancy. The humble modesty is equal to the miracle. Such things as these do they write, in the coolest terms, the plainest manner. They subjoin not a fulsome, or any other set encomium. They have not added a passionate exclamation, or so much as a hint of special observation. But the attentive reader, when he pauses and reflects, finds his heart glowing with an ardent affection and zeal for him of whom they write. Nor can he help being transported with the thought of the unparalleled unaffected honesty and simplicity of the evangelists.

"But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose." How simple! and yet how truly great is this narration of St. Matthew!

I cannot leave this story, till I have observed the wondrous propriety of our Lord's action throughout the whole of this affair; which was so public, so diversified with incidents, and so various in its circumstances. So soon as Jairus comes to him, he goes along with him, in order to perform the useful work he had desired of him. As he is going, a woman is healed by a secret touch of his garment. He asks, "Who touched me?" The disciples tell him, that was a strange question. Still our Lord insists upon it, that somebody had touched him. He then looks round him, but points out no person: is only silent, till the woman comes, and

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trembling reveals the whole matter. And what a lustre has this delay of Jesus in the way to Jairus's house thrown upon his character! What a discovery has it made of his knowledge and power! When he hears it reported to the father, that the damsel was dead, he bids him "not fear, but believe." When he comes to the house, he directs all things with the highest propriety, by clearing the house of strangers, that it might be quiet; taking in with him, "into the room where the young woman lay," the properest persons that could be chosen out of his disciples, and out of the whole multitude that was there.

In the history of raising the young man at Nain it is said: "And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier, (and they that bare him stood still) and he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

On ordinary occasions Jesus could not work a miracle without being first sought to, lest thereby a suspicion should have arisen, that he had chosen objects within his power. But here the meeting of the corpse being perfectly casual, he had an opportunity of showing both his power and his goodness, without being sought to. And he wisely and graciously lays hold of it, as soon as it offers. How glorious is Jesus here! Travelling with his disciples he meets a dead man, and carried forth to burial. And he on the sudden, without any previous notice of the case, without any prior preparation, raises the dead man to life.

"And he delivered him to his mother." The highest propriety! He was moved by compassion to perform this work, and he delivers the raised person to her, to whom his life was the greatest comfort. Not to say farther, that she would best know, whether it was her son or another, that was restored to her: and that instead of making a show, and calling upon the multitude to admire the action; he barely delivers the young man to his mother, as if he had only performed an ordinary piece of kindness.

In the history of raising Lazarus there are these things very observable. Jesus had declared to his disciples a design of going to Bethany. Before he sets out from the place where he then was, he says to them: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep." Here we have again a like example of humble modesty, with that I observed before in the account of Jairus's daughter. These low soft terms does he use concerning death, and raising to life: the one he terms sleep, the other awaking him out of it; as appears from what follows. "Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep." Jesus was obliged to let them understand what he meant. "Then said he unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there (to the intent you may believe) nevertheless let us go." When Jesus spoke in the low and ambiguous term of sleep, he added: "But I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." But having now said plainly, that Lazarus was dead, he does not say: But I go to raise him to life: only intimates in general, that there would be some new proof given them to confirm their faith; studiously avoiding every thing that had any appearance of boasting. The modesty here is rather greater than in the former case. There Jesus had to do with a mixed multitude of strangers. Here he is talking with his own disciples. Yet he forbears to say beforehand in plain terms, that he should raise Lazarus to life.

Herein also is adorable the wisdom, the goodness, the condescension of Jesus; that he who could have healed sick Lazarus, or raised him when dead, without opening his lips, or rising from his seat, went from the place of his retirement beyond Jordan into Judea, where they had lately sought his life: because his raising up Lazarus at Bethany, the place where he had died, and was well known, in all those circumstances, and before so many persons as he afterwards did, in person, would be a means of convincing men of the truth of his mission, and of drawing men of that and future ages to the belief of his doctrine, which is so suited to prepare them for eternal life.

There is likewise somewhat very remarkable in the manner of performing this miracle. The great works which our Lord did are in themselves a proof, that he was espoused by God. He accordingly made frequent and public appeals to his works, as certain proofs and evidences, that God was with him. But he did not ordinarily, at the time of doing these works, formally and expressly address himself to God. But now being about to perform in the sight of mortal men so extraordinary and affecting a thing, as the raising up from the grave a man that had been buried four days, he lifts up his eyes to heaven, and adores the Father in an act of praise and thanksgiving; acknowledging the power of doing the works he had already done, and of that he

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was then going to perform, to have been given him by the Father. "Then took they away the stone from the place, where the dead was laid. And Jesus lift up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." That is, the works I do, declare that thou art with me; but that the people may have the fullest assurance that thou concurrest with we, and that the words I speak are not mine but thine; before I do this great and awful work in their sight, I publicly praise and thank thee. In this way (of an immediate appeal to God) the fullest proof possible was given, that his authority was from the Father, and all objections were answered. See John xiv. 8—11. xvi. 28—30.

Other things might be observed here, but I shall take notice of but one particular more. "And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." Sure the majesty of the voice well became the work. Herein is some resemblance of that loud command, at the sound of which shall be broken all the bars of hell and the grave, and their doors fly open, and the dead of all orders and of all times shall awake and come forth; some to honour, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. There is a peculiar propriety and decency in this loud and majestic voice, as it had been immediately preceded by an humble and thankful acknowledgment of the Father, who is over all.

THE END OF A VINDICATION OF THREE OF OUR SAVIOUR'S MIRACLES.

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A LETTER,

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1730,

CONCERNING THE QUESTION, WHETHER THE LOGOS SUPPLIED THE PLACE OF A HUMAN SOUL IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

TO WHICH ARE NOW ADDED,

TWO POSTSCRIPTS:

THE FIRST CONTAINING AN EXPLICATION OF THOSE WORDS, THE SPIRIT, THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE SPIRIT OF GOD, AS USED IN THE SCRIPTURES; THE SECOND, CONTAINING REMARKS UPON THE THIRD PART OF THE LATE BISHOP OF CLOGHER'S VINDICATION OF THE HISTORIES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.—John v. 39.

Ergo nec Parentum, nec Majorum Error sequendus est: sed Auctoritas Scripturarum, et Dei docentis Imperium.—Hieron. in Jer. cap. ix. ver. 12—14.

THE PREFACE.

THOUGH the names in this letter are fictitious (as they always were, and the same that appear now) it is a part of a real correspondence. Papinian, who was a man of a mature age, of great eminence, and a diligent reader of the sacred scriptures, has long since accomplished his course in this world. Philalethes is still living. The letter sent to Papinian was never returned, but Philalethes kept a copy of it. Though written almost thirty years ago, it has hitherto lain concealed in the writer's cabinet. Nor has it, till very lately, been shown to more than two persons, one of whom is deceased. Whether this will be reckoned full proof, that the writer is not forward to engage in religious disputes, I cannot say. This however is certain: he would have great reason to think himself happy, if, with the assistance of others, without noise and disturbance, in the way of free, calm, and peaceable debate, he could clear up a controverted point of religion, to general satisfaction.

If any should ask, why is this letter published now? I would answer in the words of Solomon: "There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak." But whether the present season has been fitly chosen, the event under the conduct of Divine Providence will best show.

The reader is desired to take notice, that whatever he sees at the bottom of the pages, is additional. There are also some additions in the letter itself, especially near the end, where more texts are explained than were in the original letter.

For better understanding the argument, it may be needful to observe, for the sake of some, that by divers ancient writers we are assured, it was the opinion of Arius and his followers, 'That[a] our

[a] ——σαρκα μονον τον Σωτηρα απο Μαριας ειληφεναι, διαξεσαιρεμενοι, και εχι ψυχην. Epiph. de Arianis in Indic. T. I. p. 606. Αλλα και αρνενται ψυχην αυτον ανθρωπινην ειληφεναι. Id. H. 69, n. 19, p. 743. A. Conf. n. 48—51.

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'Saviour took flesh of Mary, but not a soul:' 'that [a] Christ had flesh only, as a covering for his 'Deity: and that the Word in him was the same as the soul in us: and that the Word, or the 'Deity in Christ, was liable to sufferings in the body.'

Mr. Whiston, in his Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Clarke, giving an account of the act in the divinity schools at Cambridge, in the year 1709, when Mr. Clarke, then rector of St. James's, received the doctor's degree, says, at p. 20, 21. 'In the course of this act, where 'I was present, Professor James —— digressed from one of the doctor's questions, and pressed him 'hard to condemn one of the opinions, which I had just then published in my Sermons and Essays. 'Which book he held in his hand, when he was in the chair. I suppose, it might be this: that 'our Saviour had no human soul, but that the Divine Logos or Word supplied its place—— 'However, Dr. Clarke, who, I believe, had not particularly examined that point, did prudently 'avoid either the approbation or condemnation of it. Yet have I reason to believe, he long 'afterwards came into it, upon a farther examination: though, I think, he ever avoided, accord-'ing to his usual caution, to declare publicly that his approbation, even upon the most pressing 'applications; which is one great instance of that impenetrable secrecy, which Dr. Sykes justly 'notes to have been in him, upon many occasions.'

So Mr. Whiston. Who clearly declares his own opinion. Who likewise supposeth, that the same was for some while received by Dr. Clarke. But he seems not to have had any certain evidence of it. For, as he acknowledges, 'Dr. Clarke never publicly declared his approbation of it.'

Nevertheless it may not be disagreeable to see here what Dr. Clarke himself says in his Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, part I. ch. iii. numb. 998. p. 197. 'Matt. iv. 1. "Then was 'Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness." From this, and many other of the following 'texts, it seems, that the Logos, the Divine Nature of Christ, did so far κενωσαι εαυτον, diminish 'itself, as St. Paul expresses it, Philip. ii. 7, that, during the time of his incarnation, he was all 'along under the conduct of the Holy Spirit.'

And Part II. sect. xxviii. p. 301. 'The Holy Spirit is described in the New Testament, 'as the immediate author and worker of all miracles, even of those done by our Lord himself: 'and as the conductor of Christ in all the actions of his life, during his state of humiliation here 'on earth.'

Before I finish this preface, I must make some citations from Dr. Robert Clayton, late Lord Bishop of Clogher; who in the third part of his Vindication of the Histories of the Old and New Testament, has expressed himself after this manuer. Letter v. p. 80, 81, or p. 448. '"He who had glory with the Father, before the world was, emptied himself," or divested 'himself of that glory, in order to redeem mankind, and descended from heaven, and "took 'upon him the form of a servant, and was made man." That is, he, who was a glorified pre-'existent spirit in the presence of God, submitted to descend from heaven, and to have himself 'conveyed by the wonderful power of Almighty God, into the womb of a virgin. Where being 'clothed with flesh, and ripening by degrees to manhood, he was at length brought forth into 'the world, in the same apparent state and condition with other human infants.'

Again, Letter vii. p. 132, 133, or 482, 483. 'And accordingly this exalted spirit was, by the 'wonderful power of God, as before related, conveyed into the womb of the virgin Mary, and 'was made man; that is, was made as much so, as his mother could make him, without being 'impregnated by man. And now being deprived of the immediate presence of God the 'Father, and being shut up in darkness, and the shadow of death, he was after nine months 'brought forth into life, in the form of a feeble infant, with all the weakness, and frailties, and 'infirmities of human nature about him. And as he grew up into life, and his reason improved, 'this only served to make the terrible change and alteration of his condition, so much the 'more perceptible, and the recollection of it so much the more grievous and insufferable. The 'dreadfulness of which state is hardly conceivable to us, because that we never were sensible 'of any thing better than our present existence. But for any being, which had ever enjoyed

[a] Αρειος δε σαρκα μονην προς αποκρυφην της θεοτητος ὁμολογει· αντι δε τυ εσωθεν εν ἡμιν ανθρωπυ, τυτ' εστι της ψυχης, τον λογον εν τη σαρκι λεγει γεγονεναι. κ. λ. Athan. Contr. Apollin. l. 2, n. 3. p. 942. C.

In eo autem quod Christum sine animâ solam carnem suscepisse arbitrantur, minus noti sunt——sed hoc verum esse, et Epiphanius non tacuit, et ego ex eorum quibusdam scriptis et collocutionibus certissime inveni. August. de Hær. c. 49.

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'the happiness of heaven, and had been in possession of "glory with the Father," to be de-'prived thereof, and to be sent to dwell here in this world, encompassed within the narrow 'limits of this earthly tabernacle, and the heavy organs, made of flesh and blood, it must, 'literally speaking, be to such a being, a hell upon earth.' So says that celebrated writer.

To the letter are now added two postscripts. Concerning which nothing needs to be said here. They who look into them will see what they are.

One thing the author would say. He hopes the whole is written in the way of reason and argument, with meekness and candour, without acrimony and abuse: though not without a just concern for such things as appear to him to be of importance.

February 12, 1759.

A LETTER,

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1730,

CONCERNING THE QUESTION, WHETHER THE LOGOS SUPPLIED THE PLACE OF AN HUMAN SOUL IN THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

TO PAPINIAN.

You have, it seems, heard of the correspondence between Eugenius and Phileleutherus, and particularly of an incidental question, concerning the Arian hypothesis. You have been informed, likewise, that I am well acquainted with this correspondence. And, as it has excited your curiosity, you demand of me an account of it, and also my own opinion upon the point in debate.

If it were proper for me to deny you any thing, I should entirely excuse myself, and be perfectly silent: being apprehensive that touching upon a subject of so much niceness and difficulty may occasion some trouble to yourself, as well as to me. But you are determined not to accept of any excuses.

I must then, without farther preamble, declare to you that I cannot but take the same side of the question with Phileleutherus: though once, for some while, I was much inclined to the other.

However, whilst I was favourable to the supposition, that the Logos was the soul of our Saviour, I was embarrassed with a very considerable difficulty. For the scriptures do plainly represent our blessed Saviour, exalted to power and glory, as a reward of his sufferings here on earth: but I was at a loss to conceive how that high Being, the first and only immediately derived being by whom God made the world,[a] should gain any exaltation by receiving, after his

[a] Dr. Clarke, Scripture Doctrine, &c. P. I. numb. 535. p. 86. 'The third interpretation is, that the Word is a person 'deriving from the Father (with whom he existed before the 'world was) both his being itself, and incomprehensible 'power and knowledge, and other divine attributes and au-'thority, in a manner not revealed, and which human wisdom 'ought not to presume to explain.'

Ib. Part II. p. 242, sect. ii. 'With this first and supreme 'cause and Father of all things, there has existed, from the 'beginning, a second divine person, which is his Word or 'Son.'

Page 297, sect. xxvi. 'By the operation of the Son, the 'Father both made and governs the world.'

Page 298, sect. xxvii. 'Concerning the Son, there are

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resurrection and ascension, a bright resplendent human body, and being made the King and Lord of all good men in this world, and the judge of mankind, and, if you please to add likewise, being made higher than the angels, to whom, according to the same hypothesis, he was vastly superior before.

But to speak my mind freely, I now entirely dislike that scheme, and think it all amazing throughout, and irreconcilable to reason.

However, that we may not take up any prejudices from apprehensions, which our own reason might afford, I shall suspend all inquiries of that sort, and will immediately enter upon the consideration of what the scriptures say of the person of our Saviour.

He is called a man in many places of the gospels. And every body took him for a man during his abode on this earth, when he conversed with all sorts of people in the most free and open manner. He frequently styles himself "the Son of man." He is also said to be "the Son of David," and "the Son of Abraham." He is called a man even after his ascension. Acts xvii. 31. "He has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordained." 1 Tim. ii. 5. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." And St. Peter to the Jews at Jerusalem, Acts ii. 22. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."

Now if Jesus Christ be a man, he consists of a human soul and body: for what else is a man?

This title and appellation of *man* being so often and so plainly given to our Saviour, must needs lead us to think that he was properly man, unless there are some expressions of another kind that are decisive to the contrary. But we find that he is not only called a man, but is also said to be a man as we are, or like to us. Heb. ii. 17. "Therefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." Ch. iv. 15. "We have not an high priest, which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." And see the second chapter of that epistle throughout.

Besides these plain expressions, describing our Lord to be a man, and like to us; this point may be argued from a great number and variety of particulars related in the New Testament: for two evangelists have recorded our Lord's nativity. St. Paul says, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," Gal. iv. 4. If it were expedient that our Saviour should be born into the world, as we are, and live in infancy, and grow up to manhood, as we do, and be liable to all the bodily wants, weaknesses and disasters to which we are exposed, must it not have been as needful, or more needful, and as conformable to the Divine Wisdom, that he should be also like unto us in the other part of which we are composed, a human soul, or spirit?[a]

Moreover, this supposition does best, if not only, account for our blessed Saviour's temptation, and every part of it. For how was it possible that he should be under any temptation to try the love of God to him, by turning stones into bread! or by casting himself down from a

'other things spoken in scripture; and the highest titles are 'ascribed to him, even such as include all divine powers, ex- 'cepting absolute independency and supremacy.'

A part of Mr. Peirce's paraphrase upon Col. i. 15, 16, is in these words: '—and since he was the first being that was 'derived from the Father. And that he must be the first 'derived from him, is hence evident, that all other beings 'were derived from God, the primary and supreme cause of 'all, through his Son, by whom, as their immediate author, 'all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in 'earth, visible and invisible, &c.'

[a] 'And when we say, that person was conceived and born, 'we declare, he was made really and truly man, of the same 'human nature, which is in all other men.—For "the me- 'diator between God and men is the man Christ Jesus," '1 Tim. ii. 6. "That since by man came death, by man also '[should] come the resurrection of the dead," 1 Cor. xv. 21. 'As sure, then, as the first Adam, and we who are redeemed, 'are men; so certainly is the second Adam, and our mediator, 'man. He is therefore frequently called "the Son of man," 'and in that nature he was always promised: first to Eve, as 'her seed, and consequently her son; then to Abraham. 'And that seed is Christ. Gal. iii. 16, and so the son of 'Abraham, next to David;——and consequently of the same 'nature with David and Abraham. And as he was their son, 'so are we his brethren, as descendents from the same father 'Adam. "And therefore it behoved him to be made like 'unto his brethren: for he laid not hold on the angels, but 'on the seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16, 17; and so became 'not an angel, but a man.

'As then man consisteth of two different parts, body and 'soul, so doth Christ——And certainly, if the Son of God 'would vouchsafe to take the frailty of our flesh, he would not 'omit the nobler part, our soul, without which he could not 'be man. For "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature;" one 'in respect of his body, the other of his soul, Luke ii. 52.' Pearson upon the Creed, Art. iii. p. 159, 160, the fourth edition. 1676.

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pinnacle of the temple! How could all the glories of this world, and the kingdoms of it, be any temptation to him, who had made all things under the Supreme Being? Had he forgot the glory and power which he once had? If that could be supposed, and that this want of memory of past things still remained, it might be as well supposed, that he had no remembrance of the orders which he had received from God, and of the commission with which God the Father had sent him into the world.

The supposition of Christ being a man, does also best account for his agony in the garden,[a] and the dark, yet glorious scene of his sufferings on the cross, and the concluding prayer there: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

And the making the Logos to be the soul of Christ does really annihilate his example, and enervate all the force which it should have upon us.

But it may be said, that there are some texts, which lead us to think, that Jesus Christ had a human body, but not an human soul: particularly John i. 14, and Hebr. x. 5.

John i. 14. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." But it should be observed, that "flesh" in the scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, is oftentimes equivalent to "man," Ps. lvi. 5. "I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." Ver. 11. "I will not fear what man can do unto me." And in innumerable other places. And in the New Testament, Matt. xiii. 20. Luke iii. 6. John xvii. 2. Acts ii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 24.

What St. John says therefore is this: "And the Word was made flesh," or took upon him the human nature.[b]

St. John says, 1 Ep. iv. 2, 3. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God." See likewise 2 Ep. ver. 7.

It is well known, that in the early days of Christianity, particularly in Asia, where St. John resided, there arose people, generally called Docetes, who denied the real humanity of Christ, and said, he was man in appearance only. These St. John opposeth in his epistles, if not in his gospel also. Against them he here asserts, that Jesus had the innocent infirmities of the human nature, and that he really suffered and died. But when he says, that "Jesus Christ came in the flesh," he does not deny, that he had an human soul, or was man completely. Indeed, it is here implied, that he was man as we are.[c]

Heb. x. 5. "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith: Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."

[a] Luke xxii. 44. "And being in an agony"——*Και γενομενος εν αγωνια.*] I would put the question, whether it might not be thus translated? "And being under great concern." I will transcribe here a passage of an ancient writer, representing the anxiety or solicitude of Julius Cæsar and others, when Octavius Cæsar, then a young man, had a dangerous sickness. *Χαλεπως δε διακειμενου, παντες μεν εν φοβῳ ησαν, αγωνιωντες, ει τι πεισεται τοιαυτη φυσις, μαλισα δε παντων ὁ Καισαρ. Διο πασαν ἡμεραν η αυτος παρων αυτῳ ευθυμιαν παρειχεν, η φιλες πεμπων, ἱατρες τε αποστατειν ουκ εων. Και ποτε δειπνωντι ηγγειλε τις, ὡς εκλυτος ειη, και χαλεπως εχοι. Ὁ δε εκπηδησας ανυποδητος ἡκεν ενθα ενοσηλευετο, και των ἱατρων εδειτο εμπαθεστατα μεστος ων αγωνιας, και αυτος παρεκαθητο. κ. λ.* Nic. Damascen. De Institutione Cæsaris Augusti Ap. Vales. Excerpta. p. 841.

I have observed, that some learned men seem studiously to have avoided the word *agony* in their translations. In the Latin vulgate is: et factus in agoniâ. But Beza translates: et constitutus in angore. Le Clerc's French version is: et comme il étoit dans une extrême inquiétude——And Lenfant's: et comme il étoit dans un grand combat——Which last I do not think to be right. For the original word is not *αγων*, but *αγωνια*. The Syriac version, as translated into Latin by Tremellius, Trostius, and others, is: cum esset in timore, instanter orabat. I shall add a short passage from V. H. Vogleri Physiologia Historiæ Passionis J. C. Cap. II. p. 4. Ideoque non immerito dici potest *αγωνια* (quam in defectu commodioris vocabuli angorem Latine vocemus) promptitudo rem quampiam aggrediundi, sed cum timore et trepidatione.

[b] 'He took upon him our human nature, became himself 'a man, subject to the like frailties with us, and lived and 'conversed freely amongst men.' Dr. Clarke's Paraphrase of St. John i. 14, the fourth edition, 1722.

[c] Ecce in quibus verbis suis omnino manifestant negare se, quod ad unitatem personæ Christi etiam humana anima pertineat; sed in Christo carnem et divinitatem tantummodo confiteri. Quandoquidem cum penderit in ligno, illud, ubi ait, 'Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum,' divinitatem ipsam volunt eum intelligi commendâsse Patri, non humanum spiritum, quod est anima——Et his atque hujusmodi sanctarum scripturarum testimoniis non resistant, fateanturque Christum, non tantum carnem, sed animam quoque humanam Verbo unigenito coaptâsse——Aut si eo moventur quod scriptum est, 'Verbum caro factum est,' nec illic anima nominata est, intelligant, carnem pro homine positam, a parte totum significante locutionis modo, sicuti est, 'Ad te omnis caro veniet.' Item, 'Ex operibus legis non justificabitur omnis caro.' Quod apertius alio loco dixit: 'Ex lege nemo justificabitur.' Itemque alio: 'Non justificatur homo ex operibus.' Sic itaque dictum est, 'verbum caro factum est;' ac si diceretur, Verbum homo factum est. Verumtamen isti, cum ejus solam humanam carnem velint intelligi hominem Christum, non enim negabunt hominem, de quo apertissime dicitur, unus mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus ——&c. Aug. Contr. sermon. Arian. cap. ix. tom. VIII.

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But it is reasonable to think, that [a] a part is here put for the whole, and that the word, "body," is not to be understood exclusively of the soul. St. Paul writes to the Romans: "I beseech you therefore, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice to God," ch. xii. 1. But no one ought hence to conclude, that the Romans had not souls as well as bodies, or that their souls might be neglected. No. The faculties of the mind, as well as the members of the body, were to be consecrated to God, and employed in his service. At the beginning of the next chapter, St. Paul says: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." Where the other part of the human nature is put for the whole.

And it is manifest from ch. ii. 17—18, and other places, that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews believed Christ to be man, or to have the human nature complete like unto us. It would therefore be very unreasonable to understand body in this place exclusively of the soul.

The words of the apostle are a quotation from Ps. xl. prophetically representing the readiness of Christ to do the will of God in this world.

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith." 'Which [b] words are capable of 'two interpretations. They may relate to our Lord's nativity, when he literally entered into 'the world. Or they may relate to the entrance upon his ministry. Then it was, that "the 'Father sanctified him, and sent him into the world," John x. 36, and xvii. 18. And then it was 'that he devoted himself to God entirely. Nor can it be well doubted, that the prayer, which 'Jesus made, when he was baptized, and received the spirit, which is mentioned Luke iii. 31. 'contained a declaration, equivalent to that in this place: "Lo I come to do thy will, O God." 'Compare John v. 30, and vi. 38.'

I will now consider some texts, which have been thought by some to represent to us the pre-existence of the soul of our Saviour, before his conception in the womb of the virgin Mary.

"The form of God," Philip. ii. 6, seems to me to have been enjoyed by our Lord in this world. It [c] denotes his knowledge of the hearts of men, his power of healing diseases, and raising the dead, and working other miracles, at all times, whenever he pleased, and all the other evidences of his divine mission. This sense does wonderfully accord with what our Lord says, John x. 34—36, and in many other places of that gospel. "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If ye called them gods, to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" But though he had so great power, "he made himself of no reputation:" he lived in a mean condition, and submitted to the reproaches of enemies, and at last to death itself. Which was plainly a voluntary submission. For being innocent, he needed not to have died, but might have been translated without tasting death.

If this be the meaning of that text, then 2 Cor. viii. 9, is also explained: that [d] "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor."

John i. 15. "John bare witness of him——He that cometh after me is preferred before me. For he was before me." And ver. 30. "This is he, of whom I said: After me cometh a man, which is preferred before me. For he was before me." But I apprehend, that John the baptist does not here say, that Jesus was before him in time. But he says: 'He who comes after me, 'has always been before me, or in my view. For he is my chief, or prince, or principal.' This suits what he says of the great dignity, and transcendent excellence of our Lord's person and character, at ver. 27. "Whose shoes latchet I am not worthy to unloose:" and ver. 23, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord:" that is, I am the

[a] 'A body is here a synecdochical expression of the human 'nature of Christ. So is flesh taken, when he is said to be 'made flesh. For the general end of his having this body 'was, that he might therein and thereby yield obedience, or 'do the will of God. And the especial end of it was, that 'he might have what to offer in sacrifice to God. But 'neither of these can be confined unto his body alone. For 'it is the soul, the other essential part of the human nature, 'that is the principle of obedience.' Dr. J. Owen upon Heb. x. 5. p. 29.

[b] See Beausobre upon Heb. x. 5.

[c] Μορφη, 'forma,' in nostris libris non significat æternum et occultum aliquid, sed id quod in oculos incurrit, qualis erat eximia in Christo potestas sanandi morbos omnes, ejiciendi dæmonas, excitandi mortuos, mutandi rerum naturas; quæ vere divina sunt, ita ut Moses, qui tam magna non fecit, dictus ob id fuerit Deus Pharaonis. Grot. in Philip. ii. 6.

[d] Id est, cum vi polleret omnis generis miracula patrandi, etiam mortuos resuscitandi, personam tamen gessit tam humilem, ut ne domum quidem haberet propriam. Grot. in loc.

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harbinger, or forerunner of the great Person, who is about to appear among you. I am come before him, to prepare for his reception.

John viii. 58. may be thought a strong text for the pre-existence of our Saviour's soul. But really he there only represents his dignity as the Messiah, the special favour of God toward him, and the importance of the dispensation by him. It is a way of speaking, resembling that in Rev. xiii. 8. "Whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world," and explained, 1 Pet. i. 20. "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world."[a] See also Eph. i. 4. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Tit. i. 2. The Jewish people have a saying, that[b] the law was before the world was created. In like manner the dispensation by the Messiah was before the dispensation of Abraham, in dignity, nature, and design, though not in time.

The Jews were much offended at the words, recorded in the 56th verse. Nevertheless our Lord does not there say, that he had seen Abraham, or that Abraham had seen him in person. What he says is this: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. And he saw it, and was glad;" that is, he earnestly desired to see the time, when all the nations of the earth should be blessed, through his promised seed, the Messiah. And "by faith he saw it, and was glad." Compare Heb. xi. 13.[c]

Another text proper to be considered here is John xvii. 5. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." But this, according to the Jewish phraseology, may be very well understood of the glory, always designed for the Christ by the immutable purpose of God. See Grotius upon the place. That our Lord had not, before his nativity, the glory, which he here prays for, is apparent from the whole tenor of the gospel, and from clear and manifest expressions in the context. For the glory, which he now prays for, is the reward of his obedience. Ver. 4. "I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me."——And St. Paul says, Philip. ii. 9. "Wherefore God also has highly exalted him," Heb. ii. 9.——"for the suffering of death he was crowned with glory and honour," ver. 10. "For it became him, for whom all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." And Heb. xii. 2. "Looking unto Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame. And is set down on the right hand of the throne of God." And Luke xxiv. 26. Our Saviour says to his disciples, in the way to Emmaus: "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" And St. Peter, 1 Ep. i. 10, 11. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired——Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." And St. Paul, Acts xxvi. 22, 23——"saying no other things than those, which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that the Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead." All harmonious, as we see, that the glory of the Messiah was subsequent to his obedience and sufferings on this earth. See likewise Rom. i. 3, 4.

Nor can I forbear to observe to you, that Augustin, who has largely considered the words of John xvii. 5, and in so doing quotes Eph. i. 4. and Rom. i. 1—4. understands them of Christ's human nature, and explains them in the same manner that I have done. Quasi vero quisquam regulam fidei intuens, Filium Dei negaturus est prædestinatum, qui eum negare hominem non potest. Recte quippe dicitur non prædestinatus secundum id quod est Verbum Dei, Deus apud Deum——Illud autem prædestinandum erat, quod nondum erat, ut suo tempore fieret, quemadmodum ante omnia tempora predestinatum erat, ut fieret. Quisquis igitur Dei Filium predestinatum negat, hunc eundem filium hominis negat——secundum hanc ergo prædestina-

[a] Fuerat ante Abrahamum Jesus divinâ constitutione: infra xvii. 5. Apoc. xiii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 20. Constat hoc, quia de ipso ipsiusque Ecclesiâ mystice dictum erat, recente humano genere, futurum, ut semen muliebre contereret caput serpentis. Grot. in Joh. viii. 58. Vid. et Bez. in loc.

[b] Sic 'legem fuisse ante mundum,' aiunt Hebræi. Vide Thalmudem de Votis. Grot. ad Joh. xvii. 5.

[c] Cæterum, ex Hebræorum idiotismo, dies alicujus nihil aliud declarat, quam spatium quo vixerit aliquis, aut insigne quidpiam, quod ipsi vel facere vel ferre contigit. Quæ res notior est, quam ut testimonio egeat. Dies ergo Domini nihil aliud significat, quam ipsius adventum in carnem. Vidit enim eum eminus Abraham, fidei nimirum oculis, ut declaratur Hebr. xi. 13——ac gavisus est,——Respicit autem expresse Christus ad id quod dicitur, Gen. xvii, 17. Abrahamum, acceptâ de nasciturο sibi illo semine promissione, sese prostravisse, et risisse. Unde et ipsi Isaaco nomen imposuit Dominus. Bez. ad Joh. viii. 56.

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tionem etiam clarificatus est antequam mundus esset, ut esset claritas ejus ex resurrectione mortuorum apud Patrem, ad cujus dexteram sedet. Cum ergo videret illius prædestinatæ suæ clarificationis venisse jam tempus, ut et nunc fieret in redditione, quod fuerat in prædestinatione jam factum, oravit, dicens: 'Et nunc clarifica me tu Pater apud temetipsum, claritate, quam habui priusquam mundus esset, apud te:' tamquam diceret, Claritatem quam habui apud te, id est, illam claritatem, quam habui apud te in prædestinatione tua, tempus est, ut apud te habeam etiam vivens in dexterâ tuâ. August. In Joan. Evang. cap. 17. Tr. cv. n. 8. ed. Bened. Tom. III. p. 2.

It has been thought by some,[a] that Christ, or the Son, appeared to the Patriarchs, and was oftentimes sent upon messages to men by the Supreme Being, before the times of the gospel. But where is the proof of this? It was the opinion of some of the ancient writers of the church, who had a philosophy, that was a mixture of Pythagorism and Platonism. Nevertheless, this supposition, that God had employed the Son in former times, before the gospel, is overthrown by the very first words of the apostle in the epistle to the Hebrews. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." It is also inconsistent with the apostle's arguments to care and circumspection, steadfastness and perseverance, which follow afterwards. Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard——For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast——how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?" See likewise ch. iii. 1. "For this man was counted worthy of more honour than Moses"——ver. 6. But Christ, as a Son, "over his own house."

Still it may be said, that nothing but the pre-existence of the soul of Christ can suit those expressions of his being "sent from God," and "coming from God."

To which I answer, that the account here given by me is well suited to all such expressions in their utmost latitude, according to the style of scripture. For we may be all said to be sent by God into the world, without the supposition of a pre-existent soul. Especially are prophets sent from God. But above all Jesus is most properly "the sent of God," as he had the highest and most important commission.

So John i. 6. "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." Nevertheless none suppose, that John the Baptist came directly from heaven: but only, that he was inspired, and had a divine command to appear in the world, and bear witness concerning the Christ, who would come presently after him.

And the commission which our Lord gave to his apostles, is expressed by himself after this manner. John xvii. 18. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." And xx. 21. "As my Father has sent me, so send I you."

But, as before said, Jesus is "the sent of God," as he had the highest commission. John iii. 34. "He whom God has sent, speaketh the words of God," chap. iv. 34. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me," chap. v. 38. "Ye have not his word abiding in you. For whom he has sent, ye believe not." See also ver. 23, 24, 30, 34, 36. And x. 36. "Say ye of him, whom the Father has sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" And in the history of the cure of the blind man, recorded in the ninth chapter of the same gospel, at ver. 7. "And said unto him: Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation, Sent." Probably here is an allusion to our Lord's character, as "the sent of God." And there may be an intimation intended, that he is the Shiloh, spoken of in Gen. xlix. 10.

There are some other texts needful to be taken notice of here, John xiii. 3. "Jesus knowing that he was come from God, and went to God," οτι απο θεϐ εξηλθε. xvi 27. "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God," οτι εγω παρα τϐ θεϐ εξηλθον. ver. 28. "I am come forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." Εξηλθον παρα τϐ πατρος. This expression is explained in chap. viii. 42. Whence we perceive, that[b] thereby is intended our Lord's divine commission. "Jesus said unto them: If God were your Father, ye would love me. For I

[a] The opinion is modestly rejected by Mr. Peirce, in his Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Hebrews. Chap. 1. ver. 2.

[b] Voyez cette façon de parler expliquée ci dessus, ch. viii. 42, par la mission. Lenfant upon John xvi. 27.

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proceeded forth, and came from God. Neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Εγω γαρ εκ τϑ θεϑ εξηλθον, και ηκω. κ. λ.

The reproaches and contradictions which our Lord met with, and the sufferings of his death, are often set before us. But if the Logos, that high and exalted spirit, in the Arian sense, was the soul of Christ; this part of his humiliation, in clothing himself with an human body, would have been frequently represented and described in the clearest and most emphatical expressions.

Here, if I mistake not, is a proper place for setting down those observations upon this scheme, which reason may suggest, and were passed over before.

In the first place, I do not apprehend it possible that so glorious and perfect a spirit should undergo such diminution by being united to an human body, as to become thereby unconscious, or to be greatly enfeebled. I think, that if this spirit were to animate, and take upon it the part of a soul in an human body; its power, cogitation, and knowledge would subsist and remain, even in its infant state. In short, the human body would be swallowed up by this great soul. That soul would exert itself in the body, and sustain it with all facility, without rest, food, or any other refreshment, against all pain and uneasiness, and every kind of infirmity. This, I say, would be the case, supposing so great a being to take upon it a human body. If an angel (as is supposed) can move with agility a material vehicle, made dense enough to be sensible to human eyes; what influence would not this powerful Logos have over the grossest human body? But this is not agreeable to fact, as represented in the New Testament: for there Jesus is said to have "increased in wisdom" as he grew up. And he had hunger and thirst, and was wearied with journeying, and had all the sinless infirmities of the human nature, and was subject to death.

But secondly, supposing this humiliation to be possible, I think, it could not be reasonable. It is not reasonable that so great a Being should submit to unconsciousness, or any such like debilitation. Consequently, it cannot be required by God. It is incongruous to all just notions of things, that any other spirit, beside a human soul, should be made subject to the infirmities of human flesh.

I forbear mentioning some things, which appear to me consequences from the Logos (in the Arian sense of that term) being the soul of our blessed Saviour. And, as they are not mentioned, they need not affect you, unless shey should occur to your thoughts.

I now proceed to the introduction to St. John's gospel. For I believe, you may be of opinion, that I must not pass it by entirely, notwithstanding its difficulty. I will therefore explain it briefly, or a part of it at least, according to the best of my ability: still willing, however, to receive farther light from any one that shall afford it.

"In the beginning was the Word." By "beginning," I think, cannot be intended the beginning of the gospel, but of the creation, or rather always, from eternity, "was the Word. And the Word was with God:" that is, was always with God, though not fully manifested, till these last days of the world.[a] "And the Word was God." Και θεος ην ο λογος. Which sometimes has been rendered thus: "And God was the Word." But there are learned men, who say, that then the Greek would have been Και ο θεος ην λογος: and, that the article being joined with λογος, therefore that is the antecedent, and our translation is right.

Here I had been wont to submit to what Dr. Clarke says, The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, P. I. numb. 535. 'Of these words there are only three interpretations. The first is, 'that the Word was that same person, whom he was with. And that is both a contradiction in 'terms, and also the ancient heresy of Sabellius.' But now that does not move me. I am of opinion, that God here is the same God that was mentioned before. St. John useth a gradation. First he says, "the Word was" always, before all time. Then he adds: "and was with God:" and lastly, that he "was God" himself. What follows confirms this interpretation, ver. 3. "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Who should this be, but God the Father, the one living and true God, and author of life, and

[a] 1 John i. 2. "For the life was manifested. And we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

1 Tim. iii. 16. "And, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh."

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all being? Are there more creators than one? Would any Jew, or disciple of Jesus, ascribe[a] the creation of the world to any but God, or his reason, or understanding, or discretion, his wisdom, his power, his word, his spirit, which is the same as God himself? Ver. 10, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him." This needs no comment. Ver. 11. "He came to his own, and his own received him not." I pray whose people were the Jews, but God's, his, who styled himself Jehovah? He now came, in Jesus, to his own people. But they received him not.

St. John therefore intends the one true God, not any inferior deity.

Shall I show this more particularly from other places of his gospel? It is observable, that St. John, out of the many discourses of Jesus, (a great part of which he has omitted, as appears from ch. xx. 30, 31. ch. xxi. 25) has selected those, in which our Lord speaks very expressly of the commission, which he had received from the Father, and of his near and intimate union with him.

In all the gospels our Saviour ascribes his miracles to the Father, particularly in Luke xi. 20, and Matt. xii. 28. And the people do the same. "And when the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." Matt. ix. 8.

But in none of the gospels is this done so frequently, and so expressly, as in St. John's. Chap. v. 9. "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do:" and onward to ver. 27. and ver. 30—32. and ver. 36, 37. chap. viii. 18. "The Father that hath sent me, beareth witness of me." Ver. 28, 29. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know, that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself: but that as the Father has taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me, is with me. The Father has not left me alone. For I do always the things that please him." Ver. 42. "For I proceeded forth, and came from God. Neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Ver. 54. "It is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God." Ch. x. 35. "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." Ver. 29, 30. "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all. And no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

This appears also in the discourses of others, recorded in this gospel, ch. iii. 2. Nicodemus says——"Rabbi, we know, that thou art a teacher come from God. For no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." And ch. ix. 30. "Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is. And yet he has opened my eyes." Ver. 33. "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."

All these texts seem to me sufficient to satisfy us, that by "the Word," which St. John says, "was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God," he does not mean a being separate from God, and inferior to him, but God himself, or the wisdom and power of God, which is the same as God, even the Father, who alone is God, nor is there any other.

If by the Word, in the introduction to his gospel, St. John had intended a being separate from God, and inferior to him; it is reasonable to expect, that he should be mentioned again afterwards. But nothing of that kind appears. He speaks indeed of "the Son, and the only begotten Son of God." But thereby is not meant "the Word," but the man Jesus, the Messiah, in whom "the Word," that is, the power and wisdom of God, resided.

I now therefore proceed, ver. 14. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us:" that is, as before shown. 'And the Word was made man, or took upon him the human nature.' "And we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." That is, 'And we beheld in Jesus such power and wisdom, that we could not doubt his being the Messiah.' That St. John intends the Lord Jesus, is evident from what he adds in the 15th verse. "John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This is he, of whom I spake. He that cometh after me, is preferred before me."

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This is the same, which, in other words, is said in divers texts of the New Testament. Matt. i. 20—23. "And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus——Now all this was done, that it might be ful-

[a] The creation of the world is always ascribed to the one living and true God, in the Old and New Testament. Gen. 1. Exod. xx. 11. Job. xxvi. 13. xxxviii. 4. Ps. xxxiii. 6. cxxxvi. 5—10. cxlvi. 5. 6. Is. xlii. 5. xlv. 12. li. 13. Jer. x. 12. li. 15. and elsewhere. Acts. iv. 24. xiv. 15. xvii. 24. Rev. iv. 8—11. x. 6. xiv. 7.

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filled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is God with us." And John iii. 34, 35. "For he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." Col. i. 19. "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." And ch. ii. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And ver. 19. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily."

"And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." As before hinted, it was not "the Word," which St. John and others beheld, but Jesus in whom the Word dwelled. Him they beheld: and his greatness was conspicuous; so that he appeared, and they knew him to be "the only begotten of the Father," or the Messiah.

"Only begotten Son." The same phrase is again in John iii. 16 and 18. in our Lord's conference with Nicodemus. "Only begotten," and "well beloved Son" are equivalent. This last is the phrase in several texts: as Matt. iii. 17. Mark i. 11. Luke iii. 22. Matt. xvii. 5. Mark ix. 7. Luke ix. 35. So Prov. iv. 3. "For I was my father's son, tender, and only beloved in the sight of my mother." Comp. 1 Chron. xxix. 1.

"The Christ," or "the Messiah," and "the Son of God," are equivalent in the New Testament. Matt. xvi. 16. Peter's applauded confession of our Lord's character is in these words: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." So likewise John vi. 69. But in Mark viii. 29. it is: "Thou art the Christ of God." And Luke ix. 20. "the Christ of God."

And that in the language of the Jews the titles of Messiah and Son of God are the same, may be seen in Matt. xxvi. 63. and Luke xxii. 66, 70. But now I shall argue it more particularly from St. John's gospel, ch. i. 34—49. John the Baptist bears testimony to Jesus under several characters, all equivalent to that of the Messiah. "And I saw," says he, "and bare record, that this is the Son of God. Again, the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples. And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith: Behold the Lamb of God." These disciples are convinced——"one of them, which heard John, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him: We have found the Messias—— Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him: We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael likewise, after some hesitation, is convinced, and makes a like profession, saying: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel."

All these pious men, acquainted with the scriptures of the Old Testament, upon the ground of John's testimony, and their own conversation with Jesus, under somewhat different appellations, but of one and the same meaning, acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ. See also John ix. 35, 36. and 1 John v. 1, 5.

The Jews, it is likely, had learned this title and character of the Messiah from Ps. ii. 7, 12. And see 2 Sam. vii. 14.

When Jesus was baptized, he was solemnly and publicly declared to be the Messiah. "There came a voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." After which having been led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, the tempter, when he came to him, said: "If thou be the Son of God," that is, If indeed thou art the Son of God,[a] or the Christ, "command that these stones be made bread."

I would now endeavour to show, upon what accounts Jesus is in the scriptures said to be "the Son of God."

Sonship is a term of nearness, dearness, and affection. In general, Jesus is the Son of God, or eminently so, as he is, so far as we know, the person in all the world most dear to God the Father. To be more particular.

1. Jesus is the Son of God, upon account of his miraculous conception and birth.

Luke i. 31—35. "An angel appeared to Mary, and said unto her: Fear not, Mary. For thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son

[a] Il y a simplement dans le Grec, 'si vous êtes Fils de Dieu,' sans article. On ne laisse pas de l'ajoûter. Car le miracle, que le diable exige de J. C. montre qu'il ne s' agit pas de savoir, 'si Jésus est enfant de Dieu,' mais si'il est 'le Fils de Dieu,' par excellence, c. a. d. le Messie. Lenfant sur Matt. iv. 3.

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of the Highest——The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." A like history of our Saviour's nativity is in the first chapter of St. Matthew's gospel.

2. Jesus is the Son of God, upon account of the especial commission given him by the Father, and the extraordinary qualifications bestowed upon him in order to his fulfilling it.

John x. 36. "Say ye of him, whom the Father has sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?"

When our Lord was baptized, "the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and rested upon him," Matt. iii. 16. Mark i. 10. Luke iii. 21, 22. And John i. 32—34. "And John bare record, saying: I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him—— And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God." And ch. iii. 34, says John the Baptist again: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." Is. xi. 1—3. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his root. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord"——Comp. Is. xlii. 1—4. chap. lxi. 1—3. and Matt. xii. 17. and Luke iv. 18, 19.

By virtue of this most plentiful and extraordinary communication of the Spirit, "without measure," or "the in-dwelling of the Father's fulness in him," as the same thing is at other times expressed, or his being "in the bosom of the Father," and acquainted with all his counsels, Jesus knew the whole will of God concerning the salvation of men, and spoke the words of God with full authority, and wrought miracles of all kinds whenever he pleased, and knew the thoughts and characters of men, and things at a distance, and things to come.

3. Jesus is the Son of God, upon account of his resurrection from the dead, on the third day, to die no more.

Rom. i. 3, 4. "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh: and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." And Heb. i. 6. "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith: And let all the angels of God worship him." Which some have understood of our Lord's coming into the world at his nativity. But more generally interpreters have understood it of our Lord's entering into his glory, and taking possession of his kingdom after his resurrection. Which brings me to another thing.

4. Jesus is the Son of God, on account of his exaltation to God's right hand, and being invested with authority and dominion over all flesh, and constituted judge of the world, by whom God will pass sentence upon all mankind.

John iii. 35. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." Ch. v. 21, 22. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." Heb. i. 1, 2. "God——has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir" or lord "of all things," ch. iii. 5, 6. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant——But Christ as a Son over his own house."

5. Another token of the especial love of the Father for Jesus Christ, as his own Son, is the pouring out of abundance of spiritual gifts, though in different degrees, upon his apostles, and all who believed in him, after his resurrection.

John i. 32—34. "And John bare record, saying: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove. And it abode upon him. And I knew him not. But he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me: Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining, the same is he, which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God." Com. Matt. iii. 11. Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16.

John vii. 37—39. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Acts xi. 15, 16. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the

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beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." See Acts i. 5. and ii. 1—36.

Gal. iv. 6. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Eph. iv. 8—11. "When he ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men:——and he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers."

Upon all these accounts, and not only upon account of his miraculous conception and birth, is Jesus "the Son of God." The texts alleged under each particular sufficiently show that they are all justly mentioned, and that none of them ought to be omitted.

There are some expressions in St. Luke's history of our Lord's nativity of a virgin mother, which show the truth of this observation. They likewise manifestly show, that it is in respect to his humanity, and the dignity conferred upon it, that he has the title of "the Son of God." The expressions, which were partly alleged before, are exceedingly remarkable. "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever. And of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i. 33.

Upon all the fore-mentioned accounts, then, and his transcendent greatness, Jesus is "the Son of God." And all these things may be supposed to be comprehended in that expression, Heb. i. 9, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The words are a quotation from Ps. xlv. 7. and seem to have been originally intended of Solomon, who by divine choice and designation was preferred before his brethren." 1 Chron. xxviii. 5. But they are also fitly applied to the Messiah; who has been greatly distinguished, and highly honoured above his brethren: meaning men, of whose nature he partook. Heb. ii. 14—16, or prophets, who had the Spirit in a due, but less measure, bestowed upon them.

All these prerogatives has God the Father, in his unsearchable wisdom, conferred upon Jesus of Nazareth, whom he chose and appointed to be the Messiah: who is also "the seed of the woman," that should bruise the head of the serpent, Gen. iii. 15. and "the seed of Abraham," in and through whom all the families or nations of the earth were to be blessed," Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. Acts iii. 25. Gal. iii. 8. The rod out of the stem of Jesse, and the branch that should grow out of his root, to whom the Gentiles would seek," Is. ix. 1—10. "Who was to restore the preserved of Israel, and was likewise given to be a light to the Gentiles, that he might be for salvation to the ends of the earth." Is. xlix. 6. or, as old Simeon said, "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of God's people Israel," Luke ii. 32. For it is a certain truth, that the grace, which has been manifested by the appearing of Jesus Christ, was from early ages purposed by the Divine Being, and foretold by his prophets. Rom. i. 1—3. Eph. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10. 1 Pet. i. 10—12.

And how agreeable the several articles of this detail are to the scriptures of the Old Testament, must appear from texts already alleged thence. Nevertheless I shall here put together a few other texts, and some of the same more largely than hitherto quoted: not transcribing them now, but referring to them, and entreating you, if you please, to read and consider them at your leisure.

Ps. ii. 6, 7, 8, 11, 12.

Ps. xxii. throughout.

Is. xlii. 1. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my servant, in whom my soul delighteth." Almost the very words of the voice, that came from heaven at our Lord's baptism and transfiguration. "I have put my Spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles;" and what follows to the end of ver. 7.

Is. xlix. 1—6. Compare Acts xiii. 47. and xxvi. 23.

We must now be able to perceive the true character of our blessed Saviour, and the great propriety with which the apostles and evangelists speak of him.

John i. 45. "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And see

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ver. 46—50. and Acts ii. 22. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and signs, and wonders, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." See also ver. 36. ch. iv. 27. "For of a truth, against thy holy child [rather son, or servant] Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together." Ch. x. 38. "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power. Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. For God was with him." Nor does our dear Redeemer disdain this title in his state of exaltation. For when he called to Saul out of heaven, and "Saul answered,—Who art thou, Lord? he said, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest," Acts xxii. 6—8. Comp. ch. ix. 5. See also ch. iii. 6. and xxvi. 9.

From all that has been said, it appears that Jesus is a man, appointed, anointed, beloved, honoured and exalted by God above all other beings.[a]

Obj. 1. It may be said: Admitting this notion of our Saviour's person, we shall lose that great instance of humiliation, and condescension, which the Arian scheme sets before us. For according to that, the most exalted spirit, next to God the Father, submits to all the laws of infancy and childhood, and is greatly incommoded by the body during its dwelling on this earth.

To which I answer: I would by no means rob you, or any one else, of any argument that is really suited to engage to humility in particular, or to all virtue in general. But, Papinian, if I am not mistaken, it appears from what was before said, that this instance of humiliation is an imaginary thing. It is impossible that so exalted a spirit should be the soul of a human body. If it is not an absolute contradiction, it is incongruous to the nature of things, and in the highest degree improbable.

[a] Some now by "the Son of God" understand an intelligent being, or emanation, begotten by the Father, or proceeding from him, in an ineffable manner, from all eternity, and of the same essence or substance with the Father. Others thereby understand a mighty spirit, or angel, begotten or formed by the will of the Father, in time, before the creation of the world, and of a different substance from the Father; which Son of God, according to them, became incarnate; that is, united himself, either to the human nature, consisting of soul and body, or to a human body, so as to supply the place of a human soul.

But those senses of this phrase, or title, are not to be found in any of the books of the New Testament. 'The Jews had 'no notion that their Messiah should be any thing more than 'mere man. See Whitby upon Rom. ix. 5.' Dr. Jortin's Discourses concerning the Christian Religion, p. 17. which indeed is well shown in the passages of ancient authors, alleged by Whitby in the place referred to.

This will lead us to the true meaning of the title, "the Son of God," in the gospels; for there many give our Lord that title, who took him to be a man especially favoured by God. This title is given to our Lord, not only by Peter in his confession, Matt. xvi. 16. and the parallel places, and John vi. 69. but also by John the Baptist, John i. 34. iii. 35, 36. by Nathanaël, John i. 49. by Martha, xi. 27. and by others, Matt. xiv. 33. Luke iv. 41. Our blessed Lord likewise often takes it to himself either directly or indirectly. John iii. 17—18. v 25. ix. 35—37. x. 36. xi. 4.

The case seems to be this. In the Jewish style, and the language of scripture, all good men, and all people, who are in a covenant relation to God, are his sons, and are entitled to many blessings and privileges: but Jesus, as the Messiah, is "the Son of God," by way of eminence and distinction.

Exod. iv. 22, 23. "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born. And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me." Is. xliii. 6. "Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." See likewise Is. xlv. 11, 12. and Jer. xxxi. 9. "For I am a father unto Israel; and Ephraim is my first-born." Ver. 20. "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child?" Hos. xi. 1. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." To which I must add Jer. xxxi. 1. "At the same time, saith the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel. And they shall be my people." Comp. ver. 9 and 33. All which is expressed by St. Paul after this manner. 2 Cor. vi. 18. "And I will be a father unto them; and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." See there also ver. 16 and 17.

Accordingly, in the New Testament, the Gentiles, who received Jesus as the Christ, being brought into God's family, and into the number of his people, are called "the sons of God." John i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." Comp. 1 John iii. 1. and see Rom. viii. 14—17. Gal. iv. 4—7. and Heb. ii. 10. and elsewhere.

Matt. xxvii. 54. "Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly, this was the Son of God." Comp. Mark xv. 39. And, says St. Luke, ch. xxiii. 47. "Now when the Centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man."

All good men and women, then, are God's sons and daughters. But Jesus, the Messiah, is "the Son of God," by way of eminence and distinction, and has in all things the pre-eminence.

This, as it seems to me, is the way of thinking, to which we are led, by comparing many texts of the Old and New Testament, where the title or denomination of "Son of God," is used.

There is therefore no foundation for the interpretations mentioned at the beginning of this note: which, nevertheless, have been received by many, and have produced intricate schemes and systems, by which the minds of Christians have been greatly perplexed, and the world itself sometimes thrown into confusion and disturbance.

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And if so great a being were to inhabit a human body, it would entirely swallow it up. That spirit would still retain its own knowledge, and power, and would raise the body above all pains, weaknesses, and wants.

Whatever advantages may be fancied in the Arian scheme, there are much greater inconveniences attending it. For, as before hinted, it deprives us of the force of our Saviour's example. We are common men. But he is supposed to be the most perfect spirit, next to God. How should any temptation, from the things of this world, affect such a being? How should he be tempted, in all respects, as we are? It could not be. It is altogether irrational.

But there are many and great advantages in supposing Jesus Christ to be a man, consisting of soul and body. His example is then justly set before us in all the strength and beauty, with which it now appears in the gospels and epistles of the New Testament.

It is also upon the ground of this scheme alone, that the expectation of attaining to a glory, like that of Jesus Christ, can be supported. For which, however, there is plain encouragement in the doctrine of the gospel. John xvii. 21—26. Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. Rev. iii. 21. and elsewhere.

These are the most glorious, the most animating hopes that can be conceived. They excite to faithfulness and zeal beyond expression. We may be made like unto Jesus Christ hereafter, if we will but follow his example, and resemble him now. But how can we admit the thought of being near to him, in the future state, who beside the merit of his obedience and sufferings here, has, in the Arian hypothesis, the glory of being employed by God in things of a quite different nature, such as creating this visible world, and all the angels, and invisible hosts of heaven?

And is not this one reason of our slothfulness, and other faults? "The truth is not in us: the words of Christ do not abide in us." We suffer ourselves to be deluded, and perverted from the truth and simplicity of the gospel, by the philosophical schemes of speculative men. And so, almost any man "may take our crown," Rev. iii. 11.

I believe, Papinian, that you, as well as other serious Christians, desire, with the apostle Paul, "to know Christ, and the power of his resurrection," Philip. iii. 10. But what is there extraordinary in the resurrection of Christ, according to the Arian hypothesis? Is it any thing extraordinary, that the Logos (in the Arian sense of that word) should raise the body, in which he has acted, and suffered for a while? He might be supposed to have an especial regard for that body, and be willing to make it glorious. But I do not see, that such a resurrection can so fully assure us of our own, as if we suppose Christ to be a man like unto us. For then his resurrection is a pattern of ours. Which is the doctrine of the New Testament. 1 Cor. xv. 20—23, and the glorious argument of St. Paul. Eph. i. 17—23. Hereby we are indeed assured of our resurrection. God the Father, who gave his own Son for us, and raised him up from the dead, will, most certainly, raise up us also, as it is expressed, 1 Cor. iv. 14. "Knowing that he, who raised up the Lord Jesus, should raise up us also by Jesus, and should present us with you." And see Philip. iii. 20, 21. In a word, here is the best foundation of unmoveable confidence in God. And the apostle expressly says in the place just referred to in 1 Cor. xv. 21. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead."

Obj. 2. Again, it may be objected, that this idea of the person of Jesus does not fully suit the strong expressions in the New Testament, concerning the love of God, in giving his Son for us.

But I think it does. For can there be any greater love, than for that person, who is immediately sent by God, who is his ambassador, invested with all his power and authority, who is the object of the Father's especial love, and therefore his own Son, who was "holy, harmless, and undefiled," Heb. vii. 16, to live a mean, despised, reproached life in this world, and then to die a painful and ignominious death for our good, and for the good of mankind in general?

Besides, this is that love of God, which is so much, and so justly magnified, and extolled in the New Testament: that God gave his Son to die for us. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" And see before ch. v. 6—8. and 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, even our Father." Gal. i. 4. See likewise 1 Tim. ii. 6. 1 Pet. i. 18—21. 1 John iii. 16. iv. 9, 10. and many other places.

If Christ had dwelt in pre-existent glory, and had come from heaven, to animate a human body; this also would have been plainly, and frequently represented to us.

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In the way, now mentioned, we go to God directly through Jesus Christ. And the love of the Father is most conspicuous in the supposition, that God sent, and appointed the man Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Herein, I say, the love of God is most conspicuous, much more than in supposing the pre-existence of the Son, the covenant of redemption, and the offer of the Son to come into the world, and many other such like things, derogatory to the honour of the Father; because they diminish our idea of his free, transcendent, and unmerited love and goodness. The gospel account is summed up in these words: "And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. And has given unto us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them: and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. See likewise what follows in ver. 20, 21. and Eph. i. 1—10.

Upon the whole, as before said, the true evangelical description of our blessed Saviour's person and character, is that, which we have in St. Peter's words, recorded Acts ii. 22. and 36. and ch. x. 38. and St. Paul's, Acts xvii. 31. and 1 Tim. ii. 5. Col. ii. 3—9. and many other places.

Nor is this a diminishing character. It is the greatest, and the most honourable to *him*, on whom it is bestowed, and the most satisfying to us, who are called upon to believe in him, to rely upon him, and follow him in the way of obedience prescribed to us.

Says God to the people of Israel of old, "Behold, I send an angel before thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not. For he will not pardon your transgressions. For my name is in him," Ex. xxiii. 20, 21. Upon which place Patrick speaks to this purpose. '"For my name is in him." He acts 'by my authority and power, and sustains my person, who am present where he is. For the 'name of God is said to be there, where he is present after a singular and extraordinary manner. '1 Kings viii. 16. 1 Chron. vi. 5, 6. Maimonides expounds it, "My word is in him," that is, 'says he, God's will and pleasure was declared by the angel—In which he seems to follow the 'Chaldee, who translates it, "for his word is in my name," that is, what he speaks is by my 'authority.'

Afterwards, when the people had trangressed in making a golden calf, and God was greatly displeased; Moses offered an earnest prayer, that he would himself go with them, and conduct them, Ex. xxxiii. 12, 13. And he received this gracious answer, by which he was encouraged. Ver. 14, 15. "And he said: My presence shall go with thee; and I will give thee rest. And he said: If thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence."[a]

"My presence, that is, I myself, as in the Greek version: αυτος προπορευσομαι σοι. In the Hebrew it is, literally, "my face." Which is the same as myself. So 2 Sam. xvii. 11. "and that thou go to the battle in thy own person." In the Hebrew it is: "that thy face go to the battle."

That the presence of God was with Jesus, the Messiah, our Lord and Saviour, in the most signal and extraordinary manner, we are assured by every book and chapter of the New Testament, and particularly by St. John's gospel, in the introduction, and throughout.

The dignity of Jesus, as Messiah, is very great, far superior to that of angels. We know it from our Lord himself, and from things said by him, whilst dwelling on this earth. Matt. xxiv. 36. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels in heaven, but my Father only." Which is thus expressed in Mark xiii. 32. "But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no not the angels, which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." To which let me add John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father. For my Father is greater than I." Which I suppose to be said of our Lord, as man.

Nor am I singular therein. The same is said by Augustine, whom I shall write out for your

[a] 'The question upon this occasion was, Whether God would himself go up with the people, who had highly offended him; or whether he should send an angel before them, to conduct them. God said to Moses: "I will send an angel before thee." And added: "For I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people; lest I consume thee in the way," Ex. xxxiii. 1—3. Upon the prayer and intercession of Moses, God is pleased to promise, that his presence should go with him. The promise must be understood necessarily, in opposition to the foregoing threatening, that God would not go up in the midst of them, but that he would send an angel before them.

'The presence of God therefore in this place must be αυτος ὁ θεος,——as the Seventy justly render it: and that in direct opposition to an angel in his name and stead.' Mr. Moses Lowman, in his Tracts, p. 38, 39. see also. p. 37.

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use. Non recte cogitas, quem locum in rebus habeat humana natura, quæ condita est ad imaginem Dei. Majores angeli dici possunt homine, quia majores sunt hominis corpore: majores sunt et animo, sed in forma, quam peccati originalis merito corruptibile aggravat corpus. Naturâ vero humanâ, qualem naturam Christus humanæ mentis assumpsit, quæ nullo peccato potuit depravari, Deus solus est major——Naturâ vero hominis, quæ mente rationali et intellectuali creaturas cæteras antecedit, Deus solus est major: cui utique injuria facta non est, ubi scriptum est, 'Major est Deus corde nostro,' 1 Joh. iii. 20. Filius ergo Dei susceptum hominem levaturus ad Patrem, quando dicebat, 'Si diligeretis me, gauderetis utique, quia vado ad Patrem, quia Pater major me est,' Joh. xiv. 28. non carni suæ solum, sed etiam menti, quam gerebat, humanæ, Deum Patrem utique præferebat. Aug. Contr. Maximin. Arian, l. 2, cap. xxv. Tom. VIII.

Dr. Whitby's paraphrase of Mark xiii. 32, is thus: '"Neither the Son," who has the Spirit 'without measure, but "the Father only."'

What I have been arguing for, was the sentiment of the Nazarene Christians. Nor do I think it can be made appear that any Jews, who were believers, had any other idea of our Saviour: excepting those called Ebionites, or some of them, who were extremely mistaken in supposing that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary.[a]

The notion of an inferior Deity, pre-existing, and then incarnate, seems to have been brought into the church by some of the learned converts from heathenism, who had not thoroughly abandoned the principles in which they had been educated. Perhaps, likewise, they hoped by this means to render the doctrine of Christ more palatable to heathen people, especially their philosophers. Moreover the Christians of the second century, and afterwards, were too averse to all Jews in general, and even to the believers from among that people. The apostle Paul had seen a temper of pride and insolence springing up in the Gentile Christians, in his own time: or he would not have delivered that caution, which we find in Rom. xi. 17—24.[b]

[a] Athanasius says, 'That the Jews at that time being in an 'error, and thinking that the expected Messiah would be a 'mere man, of the seed of David—for that reason the blessed 'apostles in great wisdom first instructed the Jews in the 'things concerning our Saviour's humanity.' De Sentent. Dionysii. n. 8. p. 248. C. D.

Chrysostom, at the beginning of his fourth homily upon St. John's gospel, says: 'The other evangelists having chiefly 'insisted upon our Saviour's humanity, there was danger, lest 'his eternal generation should have been neglected by some: 'and men might have been of the same opinion with Paul 'of Samosata, if John had not written.' In Joh. hom. 4. tom. VIII. p. 27. A. B. Bened.

In his first homily upon the Acts, he expresseth himself again to this purpose: 'In the discourses of the apostles re-'corded in this book, little is said about Christ's divinity. 'But they discourse chiefly of his humanity, and passion, and 'resurrection, and ascension; because his resurrection and 'ascension to heaven were the points necessary to be proved 'and believed at that time.' In Act. ap. hom. i. t. IX. p. 3. A.

Augustine in one of his sermons says, 'Peter and the 'other apostles have written of our Lord, but it is chiefly 'concerning his humanity.' Again, 'Peter says little of our 'Lord's divinity in his epistles,' but John enlarges upon that subject in his gospel: quoniam Petrus scripsit de Domino, scripserunt et alii: sed scriptura eorum magis circa humanitatem Domini est occupata——Sed de divinitate Christi in literis Petri aliquid [al. non aliquid]: in Evangelio autem Joannis multum eminet. Serm. 253. cap. iv. t. V. And in his Confessions he informs us, that for a great while he was of opinion that Jesus was a most wise and excellent man, miraculously born of a virgin, and sent by God, with a high commission, to give us an example of steadfast virtue, amidst the temptations of this world, and to instruct us in the way how we might obtain everlasting salvation. Ego vero aliud putabam, tantumque sentiebam de Domino Christo meo, quantum de excellentis sapientiæ viro, cui nullus posset æquari: præsertim quia mirabiliter natus ex virgine, ad exemplum contemnendorum temporalium pro adipiscendâ immortalitate, divinâ pro nobis curâ tantam auctoritatem magisterii meruisse videbatur. Conf. l. 7. c. xix. n. 25. Ego autem aliquanto posterius didicisse me fateor——quomodo catholica veritas a Photini falsitate dirimatur. Ibid. But upon reading the works of some Platonic philosophers, which were put into his hands, he altered his opinion. Et primo volens ostendere mihi——quod verbum tuum caro factum est, et habitavit inter homines, procurâsti mihi, per quemdam hominem immanissimo typho turgidum, quosdam Platonicorum libros ex Græcâ linguâ in Latinam versos: et ibi legi, non quidem his verbis, sed hoc idem omnino multis et multiplicibus suaderi rationibus, quod in principio erat Verbum, &c. Ibid. cap. ix. n. 13. vid. et cap. xx. n. 26.

[b] I take this breach of communion, correspondence and communication between the Jewish Christians that fled from Jerusalem into the East, and the Gentile Christians, (which breach continued till the former were totally destroyed, or dissipated) to have been a great mismanagement, and the greatest misfortune that ever befel the Christian church—— St. Paul laboured with all his might, aim, and study, to keep up union, communion, and friendship, between these two bodies of Christians. And he did with great difficulty preserve it in some good measure, as long as he lived——Epiphanius had some knowledge of those of the Jewish Christians, which remained to his time, that is 370, whom the Gentile Christians then called Nazarenes. And he styles them heretics; for no other reason that I can perceive, but that they, together with their Christian faith, continued the use of circumcision, and of the Jewish law. Which is a thing, that St. Paul never blamed in a Jewish Christian, though in the Gentile Christians he did. Dr. William Wall, in the Preface to his Notes upon the O. T. p. xi. xii.

That is a melancholy observation. Let us endeavour to repair the damage here bewailed, by diligently studying, and resolutely adhering to the doctrine of Christ's apostles, as contained in the books of the New Testament; wherein, I verily believe, are delivered all the truths of religion, and in sufficient perspicuity, if we will but attend.

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Thus far I have pursued my own thoughts, without consulting any other writer at all, or very slightly, except in those places where I have expressly said so. But I all along intended, before I finished, to observe a part of what is said by Dr. Clarke in his Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity; which I have now done. And I cannot forbear saying, that his intepretations of texts are generally false, arising, as from some other causes, so particularly, from an aversion to Sabellian, or Socinian senses: some of which may be absurd, and unnatural. But I much prefer Grotius's interpretations upon the comparison, above Dr. Clarke's. So far as I am able to judge, Grotius explains texts better than the professed Socinians. The reason may be, that he had more learning, and particularly was better acquainted with the Jewish style. But I am apt to think, that their later writers have borrowed from him, and improved by him.

However, this is said very much in the way of conjecture. For I must acknowledge that I have not been greatly conversant with the writers of that denomination. I have never read Crellius de uno Deo Patre: though I believe it to be a very good book. There is also, in our own language, a collection of Unitarian Tracts in two or three quartos. But I am not acquainted with it. Nor can I remember, that I ever looked into it. I have formed my sentiments upon the scriptures, and by reading such Commentators, chiefly, as are in the best repute. I may add, that the reading of the ancient writers of the church has been of use to confirm me, and to assist me in clearing up difficulties.

I observe then, that many of the texts in Dr. Clarke's P. I. ch. ii. sect 3, concerning the highest titles given to Christ, instead of proving his opinion, are inconsistent with it, and confirm that for which I argue. Yea they prove it, and agree with no other: such as "the Father is in me, and I in him: he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me: if ye had known me, ye would have known the Father also: I in the Father, and you in me, and I in you: he that hateth me, hateth my Father also: all things that the Father hath, are mine," &c. &c.

Script. Doct. ch. ii. sect. 3. numb. 616. p. 114, 115. is a quotation from Justin Martyr. 'The 'Jews,' saith he, 'are justly reproved for imagining that the Father of all things spake to 'Moses, when indeed it was the Son of God, who is called the angel and the messenger of the 'Father.' Again, afterwards, from the same Justin. 'Yet it was not God the creator of the 'universe, which then said to Moses, that he was "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, 'and the God of Jacob."'

This appears to me very strange, that the Jews should not know who was their God, and delivered the law by Moses. And I cannot help wondering, that any learned men of our times should pay any regard to such observations as these. Is it not better to say, that Justin was mistaken, than that the Jewish people were mistaken in such a thing as this? For Justin was a convert from heathenism, and had been a philosopher, and brought along with him many prejudices, which might hinder his rightly understanding the Old Testament.

That God, who spake to Moses, and brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, is the Creator of the universe, is manifest. Exod. xx. 1, 2, 3. "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Ver. 10, 11. "But the seventh day is the sabbath of Jehovah thy God—— For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." Is. xl. 27, 28. "Why sayest thou, O Jacob——My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, nor is weary?" See also ch. xlv. 11, 12, and elsewhere.

Neither our Saviour, nor his apostles, had any debate with the Jews upon this head: but plainly suppose, that they were right, as to the object of worship. Therefore our Lord says to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 22, "Ye worship ye know not what. We know what we worship. For salvation is of the Jews." John viii. 54. "It is my Father that honoureth me: of whom ye say, that he is your God." Acts iii. 13. "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his Son Jesus——" Ver. 30. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree." Are not these texts clear? However, see likewise Matt. xi. 25. John xvii. throughout, and xx. 17, 21. Eph. iii. 14. Heb. i. 1, 2. 1 John iv. 14.

Mark xii. 28, 29, "One of the scribes came, and asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? Jesus answered him: The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," Deut. vi. 4. To which the scribe assented. And Mark xii. 34. "When

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Jesus saw, that he answered discreetly, he said unto him: Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." All which supposeth, that the Jews were not mistaken about the object of worship.

Once more. Our Lord's argument with the Sadducees, in behalf of a resurrection, taken from Ex. iii. 6. and recorded Matt. xxii. Mark xii. Luke xx. supposeth "the God of Abraham," &c. to be the one true God, "who is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him."

In short, if Justin Martyr be in the right, it is not sufficient to say, that the Jewish people were mistaken: but we must say, that the Old and New Testament, and the sacred penmen of them, and all who speak therein by inspiration, are mistaken.

Unquestionably, God may make use of the ministry of angels, as well as of men. But it is not the messenger who is God: but he, from whom he comes, and in whose name he speaks.

I may show this by an instance or two. Gen. xxii. 15—18. "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said: By myself I have sworn, saith the Lord, that because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only son; in blessing I will bless thee." Here is mentioned an angel. But he is only God's messenger, and God speaks by him. Of this we are fully assured by an argument in the epistle to the Hebrews, Ch. vi. 13, 14. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying: Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee."

For certain, therefore, this was the oath of God Almighty, the one living and true God, and the Creator of all things. For there was "no greater than he." And that this was the one true God, appears, as from many other texts, so particularly from Ps. cv. where the Psalmist gratefully commemorates God's wonderful works, and expressly mentions his mindfulness of "his covenant with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac," ver. 9.

St. Stephen speaks of the Jews having received "the law by the disposition of angels," Acts vii. 54. that is, by their ministration, under God the supreme lawgiver, who at that time had the attendance of a numerous host of angels. Deut. xxxiii. 1. 2. Comp. Heb. ii. 2. And, says the Psalmist very poetically, Ps. lxviii. 17. "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of thousands. The Lord is among them, in his holy place, as in Sinai." And see Is. xxxiii. 22.

I must take some other things from the above-mentioned learned writer.

Script. Doct. ch. ii. sect. 3. numb. 576. 'John iii. 13. "No man hath ascended up to 'heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven." The 'meaning is explained, ch. i. 18. "No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten 'Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him."' Excellently well in my opinion. That is the whole of Dr. Clarke's note upon that text.

Script. Doct. n. 580. p. 96. John v. 18. "But said also, that God was his Father, making himself equal with God." Here Dr. Clarke speaks to this purpose. 'Assuming to himself the 'power, and authority of God. It is the same accusation with that other. Ch. x. 33. "We 'stone thee——for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." And 'Mark ii. 7. "Why does this man thus speak blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God only?' 'The Jews, it is evident, did not by these expressions mean to charge Jesus with affirming him-'self to be the supreme, self-existent, independent Deity: nay, not so much as with taking 'upon himself to be a Divine Person at all: but only with assuming to himself the power and 'authority of God.' So far is not amiss in my opinion. What follows there I leave to those who may like it.

Script. Doct. numb. 645. p. 124. Col. ii. 9. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily." The note is this. 'Ch. i. 19. "It pleased the Father, that in him should 'all fulness dwell." And John xiv. 10. "The Father that dwelleth in me, he does the works."' Excellently well, according to my apprehension.

This will lead me to proceed somewhat farther, and to consider some other texts before I conclude.

Rom. i. 3, 4. "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

Here are two things: first, that "Jesus was made of the seed of David:" secondly, that he

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was "declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead." Both which may be illustrated by comparing other texts.

How this text is explained by those who favour the Arian hypothesis, of the Logos supplying the place of a human soul in the person of Jesus, may be seen in divers writers.[a] I shall explain it as I am able, without attempting a particular confutation of any.

First, "who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." That phrase, "according to the flesh," is in several other texts. Some of which may be observed. Acts ii. 30. "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne——Rom. ix. 3. "For I could wish, that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh——ver. v. "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came." And see 2 Cor. v. 16.

Secondly, it is added: "And declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

There are several texts to be observed here, Acts ii. 32. "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses"——ver. 36. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Jesus was, and had been declared to be the Christ, the Son of God, whilst he was here on earth. But this was more fully manifested by his resurrection, and the consequent effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles and others. See Acts xiii. 33. and Heb. v. 5. And our Lord himself had mentioned this to the Jews, as "the sign," the most decisive, and demonstrative evidence, that he was indeed the Messiah, as he had said. See Matt. xii. 38—40. xvi. 1—5. Luke xi. 29, 30. John ii. 18, 19. iii. 14. viii. 28. xii. 32.

Now therefore we may explain, and paraphrase this text after this manner: 'Cocerning 'his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who, with regard to the external circumstances of his nativity 'into this world, was of the family and lineage of David: from whom God had promised the 'Messiah should descend: and with regard to the "spirit of holiness," or the divine energy and 'influence, by which he had been contrived in the womb, and by which he was sanctified to 'his high office, and by which he wrought the greatest miracles, he was the Son of God, and 'was known to be so. But was most fully and solemnly constituted, and declared to be the 'Son of God, by that wonderful demonstration of the divine power, his resurrection from 'the dead.'

Nor is it easy to avoid recollecting here, in what terms St. Paul speaks of the power which God exerted in raising Christ from the dead, and exalting him to that dominion, which was the consequence of his resurrection. Eph. i. 19—23.

I shall transcribe below [b] a part of Grotius's annotations upon this text, and refer to others.[c]

Eph. iii. 9. "And to make all men see, what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

Here it may be observed, in the first place, that those words, "by Jesus Christ." are by some learned men suspected to be an interpolation." [d]

But, secondly, allowing them to be genuine, it is to be observed, that many learned men are of opinion that St. Paul is here speaking of the new creation. So says Grotius. Omnia Christus fecit nova. 1 Cor. v. 17. Et divinior hæc creatio, quam prior illa. And you very well know Mr. Locke's paraphrase, which is this: 'Who frames and manages this whole new creation

[a] See the Paraphrases of Mr. Locke, and Dr. Taylor.

[b] Sed sensum difficiliorem efficit curtata locutio, quam evolvere conabimur. Jesus Filius Dei multis modis dicitur; maxime populariter, ideo quod in regnum a Deo evectus est; quo sensu verba Psalmi ii. de Davide dicta, cum ad regnum pervenit, Christo aptantur. Act. xiii. 33. et ad Heb. i. 5. v. 5. Hæc autem Filii sive regia dignitas Jesu prædestinabatur, et præfigurabatur, jam tum cum mortalem agens vitam magna illa signa et prodigia ederet——Hæc signa edebat Jesus per spiritum illum sanctitatis, id est, vim divinam, per quam ab initio conceptionis sanctificatus fuerat. Luc. i. 35.——Ostenditur ergo Jesus nobilis ex maternâ parte, utpote ex rege terreno ortus, sed nobilior ex paternâ parte, quippe a Deo factus Rex cœlestis post resurrectionem. Heb. v. 9. Act. ii. 30. et xxvi. p. 2. 3. Grot. Annot ad Rom. i. 4.

[c] Vid. Limborch. Comment. in Rom. i. 3, 4. et Enjedini Explicat. V. et N. Test. p. 258—264.

[d] Δια τυ Ιησυ Χριστυ.] Deest in Alexandr. Vulg. Syr.——Et quidem, cum vix fieri possit, ut exemplaribus antiquissimis exciderint, scribarum seu fraude, sive incuriâ, verba tam insignia, præsertim ante tempora Arii; adjecta hoc loco crediderim, interpretamenti gratiâ, ex illo Apostoli. Col. i. 16. Mill. in loc. Vid. et Bez. in loc.

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by Jesus Christ.' And he has endeavoured in a long note to support that paraphrase. This likewise is the sense of Calvin. 'Qui omnia creavit per Christum.'] Non tam de prima creatione interpretari licet, quam de instauratione spirituali. Tametsi enim verum est illud, Verbo Dei creata esse omnia, quemadmodum tot locis habetur: circumstantia tamen loci postulat, ut de renovatione intelligamus, quæ continetur in beneficio redemptionis. Beausobre likewise has a very valuable note upon this text; but being somewhat prolix, I only refer you to it.

2 Cor. iv. 4. Christ is styled "the image of God." Ὁς ἐστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ. Upon which Whitby's note is to this purpose. 'Christ seems here to be styled the image of God, not in the sense of 'Theodoret, as being "God of God," but rather, as the text insinuates, with relation to the 'gospel, and his mediatory office: in which he has given us many glorious demonstrations of the 'power, the wisdom, the holiness, purity amd justice, the mercy, goodness, and philanthropy 'of God. Tit. iii. 4.' Beza's note upon the place is to the like purpose. Id est, in quo seipsum perspicue conspiciendum præbet Deus, ut 1 Tim. iii. 16. Neque enim Dei imaginem nunc vocat Paulus Christum alio quam officii ipsius respectu: ut, licet vera, tamen sint ἀπροσδιόνυσα, quæ nonnulli ex veteribus hoc loco περὶ τῆς ὁμοουσίου deseruerunt. So that I need not here appeal to Grotius.

Col. i. 15. "Who is the image of the invisible God." Mr. Peirce's note is in these very words. 'The Father alone is represented in the New Testament, as the "invisible God." See John i. '18. v. 37. vi. 46. 1 Tim. i. 17. vi. 16. Heb. xi. 27. 1 John iv. 12, 20. Christ is never repre-'sented as invisible. It might seem strange, if he should, since he actually took upon him flesh, 'and appeared, and was seen in the world: which are things the nature of the Father cannot 'possibly admit. His being called "the image of God" in this place, and 2 Cor. iv. 4. implies 'his being visible, and that the perfections of God do most eminently shine forth in him.'

So writes Mr. Peirce. And by Christ seems to mean the Logos, or Christ in his pre-existent state, before he came into this world: which appears to me not a little strange. God, the Father, unquestionably, is invisible. So I think, are the Logos, in the Arian sense of that term, and also angels, and the souls of men, and all beings which we call spirits. None of them are visible to our bodily eyes.

Therefore Christ's being "the image of God," must be understood of his acting in this world. God is invisible in his nature and essence. But he can manifest himself, and make known to us in his mind and will, by those whom he sends as his ministers. This appears to me very plain and evident from John xiv. 8—11. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." What, now, is the answer which our Lord makes to that disciple? Does he reprehend him, as asking an impossibility? No. His answer is this: "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father. And how sayest thou, show us the Father!" See what follows, and ver. 7.

I think that Irenæus says the same that I have just now done. 'Beati mundi corde, quoniam ipsi videbunt Deum.' Sed secundum magnitudinem quidem ejus, et mirabilem gloriam, 'nemo videbit Deum, et vivet.' Ex. xxxiii. 20. Incapabilis enim Pater. Secundum autem dilectionem et humanitatem, et quod omnia possit, etiam hoc concedit iis qui se diligunt, id est, videre Deum.——Homo etenim a se non videt Deum. Ille autem volens videtur hominibus, quibus vult, et quando vult, et quemadmodum vult. Potens est enim in omnibus Deus: visus quidem tunc per spiritum prophetiæ, visus autem et per Filium adoptive. Videbitur autem et in regno cœlorum paternaliter. Iren. l. 4. cap. 20. al. 37. n. 5. p. 254.[a]

So likewise when Christ is called "the image of God" in 2 Cor. iv. 4. the place before cited, the meaning is, that he was so in this world. This I think to be exceeding evident from the context, which will be now recited more at large:——"lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them——For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face," or person, "of Jesus Christ."

It follows in the same Col. i. 15. "Who is the first-born of every creature," or rather, as

[a] I must transcribe Grotius here. *Qui est imago Dei invisibilis*] Dei inaspecti aspectabilis imago. Ita enim Latini loquuntur. Idem sensus 2 Cor. iv. 4. et 1 Tim. iii. 16. Heb. i. 3. Adam imago Dei fuit, sed valde tenuis. In Christo perfectissime apparuit, quam Deus esset sapiens, potens, bonus. Sic in aquâ solem conspicimus. Aliud imago, aliud umbra, qualis in Lege. Heb. x. 1. Grot. ad Col. i. 15.

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seems to me, "of the whole creation. πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως: that is, he is the chief, the most excellent of the whole creation. Pelagius says, it is to be understood of Christ in regard to his humanity. He is the first, not in time, but in dignity. So it is said, "Israel is my first-born." Primogenitus secundum assumpti hominis formam, non tempore, sed honore, juxta illud: '*Filius meus primogenitus Israel.*' Pelag. in loc. Ap. Hieron. tom. V. p. 1070.'

Grotius understands it of the new creation. He refers to 2 Cor. v. 17. Rev. xxi. 5. Heb. ii. 5. to which, perhaps, might have been added Heb. xii. 23. "The church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven."[a] He likewise says, that in the sacred scriptures "the first-born" sometimes denotes the greatest or highest, and refers to Ps. lxxxix. 27. Jer. xxxi. 9. Primus in creatione, nova scilicet, de qua 2 Cor. v. 17.——Primogenitum Hebræis dicitur et quod primum, et quod summum est in quoque genere.

For the explication of what follows: I mean Col. i. 16—20, I beg leave to refer you to Grotius.

Heb. i. 1, 2. "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by," or in "the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by," or in "his Son," the promised Messiah:——εν τοις προφηταις——ς υιῳ. "Whom he has appointed heir of all things: by whom also he made the worlds." Grotius thinks that the Greek phrase may be rendered "for whom;" which is very suitable to the coherence, it having been before said, that he was "appointed heir," or lord "of all things." Videtur δι ᾧ hic recte accipi posse pro δι ον, "propter quem." Ideo autem hæc interpretatio hoc loco maxime mihi se probat, quia ad Hebræos scribens videtur respicere ad dictum vetus Hebræorum, propter Messiam conditum esse mundum.[b]

Ver. 3. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." That expresseth the glory of Jesus Christ in this world. He is the refulgence of his Father's glory, which shone upon him, and was seen in him. In him appeared the wisdom, the power, the truth, the holiness, the goodness, the mercifulness of God. It is much the same as "the form of God," Philip. ii. 6. Says Grotius, Ος ων απαυγασμα της δοξης——Repercussus divinæ majestatis, qualis est solis in nube, quæ dicitur παρηλιος——Majestas divina, cum per se conspici nequeat, cernitur in Christo, sicut sol, quem directe oculi nostri tueri nequeunt, cernitur in aqua, speculo, nube. Vide 2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 15. Και χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως αυτου—Υποστασις hic non ita sumitur, quomodo Platonici, et post Origenem ex Platonicis Christiani, sumpsere,——Ita potentia, justitia, veritas in Deo Christi Patre sunt primario, in Christo vero secundario, sed ita ut nobis in Christo ea evidenter appareant. Joh. xiv. 9.

The same ver. 3. "and upholding all things by the word of his power." This must relate to our Saviour's transactions in this world, because it precedes the mention of his death, which follows next. I have looked into Brenius, who says the same: and I shall transcribe him, as it is likely you have him not with you. Cumque omnia potenti suo jussu in terris ferret. Φερειν hic, ut interpretes nonnulli recte annotant, potius significat agere, sive moderari, et gubernare, quam portare aut ferre: nisi ferendi aut portandi verbum hoc sensu accipiatur, ut metaphorice designet Christum etiam in terris munus suum administrantem, omnia ad regni cœlestis in terris dispensationem pertinentia, velut humeris suis portasse. Conf. Is. ix. 6.

To the same purpose likewise Limborch, whom I shall transcribe also in part. Sic videmus Domini Jesu potentiæ omnia fuisse subjecta, ejusque miracula fuisse universalia in totam naturam; nullamque fuisse creaturam, quin imperium ipsius agnoverit——Quibus omnibus præconii sui divinitatem adstruxit, seque a Deo Patre suo esse missum probavit. Quæ omnia solo jussu efficere, vere divinum est. Et qui id facit quasi imago Dei est, potentiamque divinam in se residere ostendit.

Hereby then, is represented the power residing in Jesus, whereby he wrought the greatest

[a] 'By Christ we are all called to be the first-born, that is, 'to be all hallowed, and to be called God's peculiar, as were 'the first-born, before the Levites were taken in their stead.' Dr. Sykes upon Heb. xii. 23.

[b] Moreover it might be observed, 'That Dr. Sykes says, 'the word αιωνας, which we render worlds, does not signify '"the heavens, and the earth, and all things that are in 'them:" but it means, he says, properly, "ages," or "cer-'tain periods of time," in which such or such things were 'done. Such were the patriarchal, that of the law, that of 'the Messiah, that of the antediluvians——These were pro-'perly αιωνες, ages.' Admit, then, the interpretation of Grotius, δι' ὃ, to be "for whom." And we have a most apt and beautiful sense, which is this, '"For whom also," or "for 'whose sake also," or in respect to whom, he disposed and 'ordered the ages, that is, the antediluvian, the patriarchal, 'the legal ages or periods, and all the divine dispensations to-'wards the sons of men.'

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miracles, whenever he pleased, by an effectual all-commanding word, healing diseases, raising the dead, rebuking stormy winds and waves, and they subsided, multiplying provisions in desert places, causing a fish to bring a stater for the tribute-money to be paid to the temple, for himself and the disciple at whose house he was entertained.

It follows in the same verse, "when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Which last words include our Lord's resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven, and there sitting on the right hand of the Father. Upon which the apostle farther enlargeth.

Ver. 4, 5. "Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?" See 2 Sam. vii. 14. Ps. ii. 7. lxxxix. 26, 27.

Ver. 6. "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him."

Mr. Peirce's paraphrase of ver. 6. is thus: 'So far is he from speaking in such a manner of 'any of the angels, that on the contrary, when he brings again his first-begotten into the world, 'raising him from the dead, he says, and let all the angels of God be subject to him." See 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22——"by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him."

Ver. 7. "And of the angels he saith, who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."

Ver. 8. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Ver. 9. "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

"But unto the Son he saith." I think it should be thus rendered: "but of the Son he saith, [or,] with regard to the Son, he saith." For in the original it is the same phrase, which in the seventh verse we have translated, "of the angels he saith." So, here, "With regard to the Son, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The words are in Ps. xlv. 6. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre." The writer of this epistle to the Hebrews says, 'And with regard to the Son, or the Messiah, God's throne is for ever and ever:' that is, the kingdom of God, erected by the Messiah, is to have no period: and this is expressed in the words of the Psalmist here quoted. Comp. Luke i. 33, 34. So likewise Dan. ii. 44. And "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." And in Rev. xiv. 6. the doctrine to be preached to all nations is called "the everlasting gospel."

Here I recollect a passage in Origen's books against Celsus, who informs us he had met with a Jew, esteemed a very learned man, 'who said that those words, "Thy throne, O God, is for 'ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre:" are addressed to the God of the 'universe: but the following words, "thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity; therefore 'God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows," are addressed 'to the Messiah.' Και μεμνημαι γε παυ θλιψας τον ιεδαιον, νομιζομενον σοφον, εκ λεξεως ταυτης. Ος προς αυτην απορων, ειπε τα τω εαυτε ιεδαισμω ακολουθα· ειπε προς μεν τον των ολων θεον ειρησθαι το, ο θρονος σε ο θεος εις τον αιωνα τε αιωνος, ραβδος ευθυτατος η ραβδος της βασιλειας σε· προς δε τον χριστον το, ηγαπησας δικαιοσυνην, και εμισησας ανομιαν. Δια τετο εχρισε σε ο θεος ο θεος σε, και τα εξης. Contr. Cels. l. 1. p. 43. Cant. Tom. 1. p. 371. Bened.

Origen did not approve of that interpretation; but to me it appears both very right and very valuable. Nor is it so difficult, but that it might have been discerned by a Christian, were it not that we are strangely misled by a great variety of wrong notions which prevail amongst us.

So again, ver. 10. "And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands." Ver. 11. "They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old like a garment." Ver. 12. "And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." Which words are a quotation from Ps. cii. 25, 26, 27. Where they are addressed to God; and so they are here. In order to preserve the connection, we are to supply some such words as these at the beginning of the quotation. 'And of the Son, or with regard to the Son, or the Messiah, the scripture

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saith,[a] "And thou, Lord,"——that is, upon account of the dispensation by the Messiah, which is to last for ever, are applicable those words: "And thou, Lord," and what follows.

The apostle, the more effectually to secure the steadfastness of the Jewish believers, observes to them the excellence, the importance, the wide extent and long duration of the divine dispensation by the Messiah. The dispensation by Moses was limited to one nation, and to a certain period of time. But the dispensation of the Messiah was to be an universal blessing, and to subsist to the end of time. And to the kingdom of God by the Messiah are fitly applicable the texts cited in this place from the Old Testament.

In a word, hereby are shown the dignity and excellence of the evangelical dispensation, in that higher expressions are used concerning it, than can be applied to any other.

I think I have above shown from scripture, that Jesus Christ was a man like unto us, or having a human soul, as well as a human body. Nor have you any reason upon that account to suspect me of heterodoxy. I think myself therein both a catholic, and a scriptural Christian. It has been the general belief of the church of Christ in all ages. And the glory of the evangelical dispensation depends upon it. In Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, there is a chapter, where it is asserted, that this was the opinion of all the ancients in general, *εμψυχον τον ενανθρωπησαντα*, of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Apollinarius of Hierapolis, Serapion Bishop of Antioch, Origen and others. Socrat. l. 3. cap. viii. Conf. Theodoret. H. E. l. 5. cap. ix. et. x.

I can easily show it to have been the opinion of some later writers, who have always been in great repute for their right faith.

Epiphanius expresseth himself upon this subject very particularly, and very emphatically. For though our Saviour was not born in the ordinary way of human generation, *απο σπερματος ανδρος ουκ ην*, he says, he was perfect man, and was tempted like unto us, but without sin. *Παντα γαρ τελειως εσχε, τα παντα εχων, σαρκα, και νευρα, και φλεβας, και τα αλλα παντα οσα εστι· ψυχην δε αληθινως, και ᾗ δοκησει· νυν δε και τα παντα οσα εστιν εν τῃ ανθρωπησει, χωρις αμαρτιας, ως γεγραπται*——Heb. iv. 15. Hær. 69. n. xxv. p. 750.

To the like purpose Jerom in several places, more than need to be cited here.

Quod autem infert: 'Homo in dolore, et sciens ferre infirmitatem,' sive 'virum dolorum, et scientem infirmitatem,' verum corpus hominis, et veram demonstrat animam. Hieron in Is. cap. liii. tom. III. p. 383.

Quod si opposuerint nobis hi, qui Christum negant humanam habuisse animam, sed in humano corpore Deum fuisse pro anima, audiant in Christo substantiam animæ demonstrari. Id. in Amos. cap. vi. ib. p. 1427.

Quod autem spiritus accipiatur pro anima, manifeste significat Salvatoris oratio: 'Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum.' Neque enim Jesus aut perversum spiritum, quod cogitare quoque nefas est, aut Spiritum Sanctum, qui ipse Deus est, Patri poterat commendare, et non potius animam suam, de qua dixerat: 'Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem.' Matt. xxvi. 38. Id. in. Abac. cap. ii. ib. p. 1618.

I shall not transcribe here any thing from Augustin, but only refer you to one place in him. Contr. sermon. Arian. cap. ix. tom. VIII.[a]

I shall proceed no farther at this time. I need not tell you, that the Unity of God is an important article of natural religion. And after it has been so strongly asserted in the Jewish revelation, and has been as clearly taught in the New Testament,[b] it ought not to be given up by Christians.

If, Papinian, you will bestow a few thoughts upon these papers, and send me the result of them, without compliment, and without resentment, you will oblige

PHILALETHES.

[a] That passage may be seen above, p. 375. note [c].

[b] See Mark xii. 29. Matt. xix. 17. Mark x. 18. John xvii. 3. Rom. xv. 6. xvi. 27. 1 Cor. viii. 6. 2 Cor. xi. 31. Eph. iv. 6. 1 Tim. ii. 5. vi. 15, 16. and elsewhere.

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THE FIRST POSTSCRIPT,

CONTAINING AN EXPLICATION OF THOSE WORDS, 'THE SPIRIT, THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD,' AS USED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

PHILALETHES, when he wrote the foregoing letter, had no occasion to proceed any farther than he did. But now he thinks, that if he could rightly explain those words, the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit, and the like, he should do a real service to religion, and contribute to the understanding of the scriptures.

This Postscript will consist of three sections. In the first shall be an argument, showing the several acceptations of the words, the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit. In the second section such texts will be considered, as may be supposed to afford objections. In the third divers other texts will be explained.

SECTION I.

AN ARGUMENT. In showing the several acceptations of these words in scripture, I begin with a passage of Maimonides, generally reckoned as learned and judicious a writer as any of the Jewish Rabbins.

'The [a] word Spirit,' says he, 'has several senses. 1. It signifies the air, that is, one of the 'four elements. "And the spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters," Gen. i. 2.

2. 'It signifies wind. "And the east-wind brought the locusts," Ex. x. 13. Afterwards, 'ver. 19. "And the Lord turned a mighty strong west-wind, which took away the locusts." 'And in like manner very often.

3. 'It is taken for the vital breath. "He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind, '[a spirit,] that passeth away, and cometh not again," Ps. lxxviii. 39. And, "all flesh, wherein 'is the breath of life," Gen. vi. 17.

4. 'It is taken for the incorruptible part of men, which survives after death. "And the 'spirit shall return to God who gave it," Ecc. xii. 7.

5. 'It signifies the Divine Influence, inspiring the prophets, by virtue of which they pro-'phesied. "I will take care of the spirit that is in thee, and will put it upon them," Numb. xi. '17. "And the spirit rested upon them," ver. 26. "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and 'his word was in my tongue," 2 Sam. xxxiii. 2.

[a] *Ruach* vox est homonyma. Significat enim, primo, Aërem, hoc est, unum ex quatuor elementis: ut 'Veruach,' et Spiritus Domini incubabat super aquas.' Gen. i. 2. 'Deinde,' significat spiritum flantem, h. e. ventum. Ut 'Veruach, et spiritus (ventus) orientalis attulit locustas.' Ex. x. 13. Item, 'Ruach, spiritus occidentalis.' ib. ver. 19. Et sic sæpissime. 'Tertio,' sumitur pro spiritu vitali. Ut 'Ruach, spiritus vitæ.' Gen. vi. 17. 'Quarto,' sumitur de parte illâ hominis incorruptibili, quæ superstes remanet post mortem. Ut 'Veruach, et spiritus hominis redit ad Deum, qui dedit eum.' Ecc. xii. 7. 'Quinto,' significat influentiam divinam, a Deo prophetis instillatam, cujus virtute prophetabant, quemadmodum explicaturi sumus, quando de prophetiâ agemus; cujus ratio quoque in hoc libro pertractanda. 'Et separabo,' min ruach, 'de spiritu, qui est in te, et ponam in eis.' Numb. xi. 17. 'Et fuit, cum quievisset super eos' haruach 'spiritus.' ver. 26. Item, Ruach, 'spiritus loquutus est in me.' 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. 'Sexto,' significat quoque propositum, et voluntatem. Ut Kol rucho, 'omnem spiritum suum profert stultus.' Pr. xxix. 11. hoc est, omnem intentionem, voluntatem suam. Sic, Et 'exhaurietur' ruach 'spiritus Ægypti in medio ejus, et consilium ejus absorbebo. Is. xix. 3. i. e. dissipabitur propositum ipsius, et gubernatio ipsius abscondetur. Sic, 'Quis direxit ruach Domini, et quis vir consilii ejus, ut indicare possit eum.' Is. xl. 13. hoc est, Quis est, qui sciat ordinem voluntatis ejus, aut qui apprehendat et assequatur, quâ ratione hanc rerum universitatem gubernet, et qui eum indicare possit. Vides ergo, quod hæc vox, 'ruach,' quando Deo attribuitur, ubique sumatur partim in quintâ, partim in sextâ et ultimâ significatione, quâtenus voluntatem significat. Exponatur in quoque loco pro ratione rerum et circumstantiarum. Rabbi Mosis Maimonidis liber More Nevochim. Part I. cap. xl.

Veritas et quidditas prophetiæ nihil aliud est, quam influentia a Deo Opt. Max. mediante intellectu, agens super facultatem rationalem primo, deinde super facultatem imaginariam influens. Id More Nevochim. P. II. cap. 36.

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6. 'It also signifies design, will, purpose. "A fool uttereth all his mind," literally, spirit, 'Prov. xxix. 11. "And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof, and I will destroy 'the counsel thereof," Is. xix. 3. "Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his 'counsellor has taught him?" Is. xl. 13.

'It is evident therefore,' says he, 'that the word spirit, when spoken of God, is to be always 'understood, either in the fifth, or the sixth and last acceptation of the word, according as the 'coherence and circumstances of things direct.'

This passage of Maimonides, which I have here transcribed at length, has been taken notice of by divers learned Christian writers.[a]

My design leads me to observe those texts only of the Old and New Testament, where the word spirit is spoken of God, or such other, as may tend to explain those texts.

And, first of all, I think, that in many places the Spirit, or the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost, is equivalent to God himself.

The spirit of a man is the same as man. So the Spirit of God must be the same as God himself. 1 Cor. ii. 11. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, that is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, [or no one] but the Spirit of God."

1 Cor. xvi. 17, 18. "I am glad of the coming of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus—For they have refreshed my spirit, and yours:" that is, me and you. Or, as Mr. Locke paraphraseth the place. 'For by the account, which they have given me of you, they have quieted 'my mind, and yours too.'

Gal. vi. 18. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit:" that is, with you. 2 Tim. iv. 22. "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," or with thee.

Ps. cxxxix. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" that is, from Thee. "Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" In like manner it is said, with regard to Moses. Ps. cvi. 33. "because they provoked his spirit," meaning him.

Is. lxiii. 10. "But they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit." Which in other texts is expressed in this manner. Numb. xix. 11. "And the Lord said unto Moses: How long will this people provoke me!" Ps. lxxviii. 56. "Yet they tempted, and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies." Ps. xcv. "When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work."

Soul is a word resembling spirit, and often signifies man, or person. Lev. iv. 2. "If a soul shall sin through ignorance"—Acts ii. 41. "And the same day were added to them three thousand souls." So likewise ch. vii. 14. and in very many other places.

And my soul is the same as I, or myself. Gen. xii. 13. "And my soul shall live because of thee." ch. xix. 10. "that my soul may bless thee, before I die." 2 Sam. iv. 9. "As the Lord liveth, who has redeemed my soul out of all adversity." Job x. 1. "My soul is weary of my life." See also ch. vii. 15. Ps. xxxv. 9. "And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord." Is. lxi. 10. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord: my soul shall be joyful in my God." Matt. xxvi. 38. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death."

The Divine Being himself sometimes adopts this form of speech. Is. i. 14. "Your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth. They are a trouble unto me. I am weary to bear them." Where, 'my soul' is the same as I, which is in the following clause.

Is. xlii. 1. "My elect, in whom my soul delighteth," or, in whom I delight. Compare Matt. xii. 18. And see Jer. v. 9. ch. vi. 8. and other places.

Secondly, By the Spirit of God, or the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, is often meant the power, or wisdom of God, or his will and command.

Ps. xxxiii. 6. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath [or spirit] of his mouth." Where the word of the Lord, and the breath of his mouth, are all one. All things came into being, and were disposed by his will, at his word and command.

In like manner Job xxvi. 13. "By his spirit he has garnished the heavens: his hand has formed the crooked serpent:" that is, the winding constellation in the heavens, which we call the milky-way, or the galaxy. The spirit, or the hand of God, which are both one, has formed all those things.

Micah ii. 7. "O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the Lord

[a] Selden de Synedr. l. 2. c. 4. & iii. iv. S. Basnag. Exercitationes in Baron. p. 45.

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straitened?" A part of Mr. Lowth's note upon which words is thus: 'Is God's hand or power shortened?' Comp. Is. lix. 1. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save."

Zach. iv. 6. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Here Mr. Lowth's note is to this purpose. 'Zerubabel and Joshua, with the Jews under their 'conduct, shall finish the temple, and re-establish the Jewish state, not by force of arms, or of 'human power, but by the secret assistance of my providence.'

Luke i. 35. "And the angel answered, and said unto her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee." The latter words explain the former. And the Holy Ghost is said to be the same as the power of God. Where likewise it follows: "Therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

Matt. xii. 28. "But if I cast out dæmons by the spirit of God, then is the kingdom of God come unto you." Luke xi. 20. "But if I with the finger of God cast out dæmons, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."[a]

So that the finger of God, or the Spirit of God, is the same as the power of God, or God himself. As St. Peter says, Acts ii. 22. "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know."

To which two texts of St. Matthew and St. Luke, just alleged, may be added, as very similar, if not exactly parallel, some others. 2 Cor. iii. 3. "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God: not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart." Undoubtedly alluding to what is said of the two tables containing the ten commandments. Ex. xxxi. 18. and Deut. ix. 10. that they were written by the finger of God, or miraculously by God himself. So also Ps. viii. 3. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained." See Patrick upon Ex. xxxi. 18.

Thirdly, by the Spirit, or the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost, is oftentimes meant an extraordinary gift from God of power, wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

Sometimes hereby is intended courage, or wisdom, or some one particular advantage only. At other times hereby is intended a plentiful effusion of a variety of spiritual gifts.

For which reason it will be needful to allege, under this article, many texts both from the Old and the New Testament.

Ex. xxxi. 1—7. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning work in gold, and in silver, and in brass—— And behold, I have given with him Aholiab,—— and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted, I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee." See also ch. xxxv. 30—35, and xxxiv. 1, 2.

Numb. xi. 16, 17. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather to me seventy men of the elders of the people:—and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them." No one understands hereby that God intended to take from Moses a spiritual being, or part of a spiritual being: but that he determined to bestow upon those elders qualifications of wisdom and understanding, resembling those in Moses, by which he was so eminent and distinguished.

Afterwards it is said, ver. 25, 26. "And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders. And it came to pass, that when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease:" meaning for some while. "But there remained two of the men in the camp: and the spirit rested upon them;—and they prophesied in the camp."

[a] 'Again, Matt. xii. 28. "If I cast out devils by the spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Here the spirit of God does not signify the Holy Ghost, or the third person of the Holy Trinity, but the power of God; as appears from the parallel passage in St. Luke xi. 20, where instead of the spirit of God, we read the finger of God. By this power the man Christ was enabled to cast out devils. For he speaks of himself here in his human, not in his divine nature, according to the notion, which the pharisees had of him; as is plain from his styling himself the Son of man, in the sequel of his discourse to them.' Abraham Le Moine's Treatise on Miracles. p. 50.

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Deut. xxxiv. 9. "And Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom: for Moses had laid his hands upon him."

Judges iii. 10. "And the spirit of the Lord came upon him, [Othniel] and he judged Israel, and went out to war—And his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim.

Judges vi. 34. "But the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon." Ch. xi. 29. "Then the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah."

—Ch. xiv. 5, 6. "Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath: and behold a young lion roared against him: and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him: and he rent him as he would have rent a kid: and he had nothing in his hand." See likewise ch. xv. 14.

2 Sam. xxiii. 1—3. "Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man, who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel, said, The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me: he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."

2 Chron. xx. 14, 15. "Then upon Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah,—a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the spirit of the Lord, in the midst of the congregation. And he said: Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem"—Another instance of what Maimonides calls divine influence, whereby a man is enabled to prophesy, or give counsel from God in a difficult circumstance, as that was with the people of Judah.

So Ezek. xi. 4, 5. "Therefore prophesy against them, [prophesy,] O son of man. And the spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said unto me: Speak, thus saith the Lord"—And St. Peter says, 2 Ep. i. 20, 21. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation, [impulse or suggestion.] For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," or by the divine influence. As St. Paul also says, 2 Tim. iii. 16. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God."

1 Chron. xii. 18. "Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said: Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse. Peace be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers. For thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them." Patrick's comment is to this purpose: 'The spirit of power, saith the Targum: that is, God powerfully 'moved him with an heroical boldness and resolution, in the name of them all to protest fidelity 'to David, in such pathetical words, as convinced him they were friends.'

2 Kings ii. 9. "And it came to pass, when they were gone over [Jordan] that Elijah said unto Elisha: Ask, what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said: I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."

By which some have supposed, that Elisha begged to have as much more of the spirit as Elijah had. But as that would be arrogance, the best commentators rather think, he only desired, that he might be as the eldest, or first-born among his fellow-disciples; even as the first-born in a family had a double portion to that of other children. See thereafter, ver. 15. and Deut. xxi. 17, and Grotius and Patrick upon this text. All must be sensible, that a gift, not a person is here intended.

Prov. i. 23. "Turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you. I will make known my words unto you." 'That is, I will teach you, and enable you to under-'stand the rules of virtue and holiness; which if you follow, you will be happy.'

Zech. xii. 10. "And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications." Which cannot imply a promise of pouring out upon them a transcendent being or spirit: but of giving them the temper, the qualification, the disposition of grace and supplication.

There are also in the Old Testament promises of the spirit relating to the Messiah.

Is. xi. 1—3. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse—And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord."

Is. lxii. 2. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles."

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And the promises of the spirit, in the times of the Messiah, import also a plentiful effusion of spiritual gifts.

Is. xliv. 3. "And I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring." Comp. John vii. 38, 39. Acts ii. 17, 18. And see Is. lix. 2. Ezek. xi. 19. xxxvi. 27. xxxvii. 14. xxxix. 29.

Joel ii. 28, 29. "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants, and the handmaids, in those days will I pour out my spirit." See Acts ii. 17, 18.

In all which texts, as seems very evident, by the spirit, and the spirit of God, and the spirit of the Lord, is meant not a being, or intelligent agent, but a power, a gift, a favour, a blessing.

I proceed to the New Testament, in which likewise many texts are to be taken notice of by us.

Matt. x. 19, 20. "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how, or what ye shall speak. For it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

Mark xiii. 11. "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate. But whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye. For it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."

Luke xii. 11, 12. "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers; take ye no thought how, or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you, in that same hour, what ye ought to say."

Luke xxi. 14, 15. "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before, what ye shall answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, [or wise speech,] which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay, or resist."

How these and the like promises were afterwards fulfilled, when the apostles of Christ, and other his disciples, were brought before the Jewish or other rulers and governors, we see in their history, recorded in the book of the Acts. Of St. Stephen, in particular, it is said, ch. vi. 9, 10. "Then there arose certain, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit, by which he spake."

John iii. 34. "For he, whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God. For God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." Here by the spirit, as I suppose, all understand a gift.

John vii. 37—39. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, saying: If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive. For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Here also, as is very plain, by the spirit, and the Holy Ghost, is meant a gift, or a plentiful effusion of spiritual gifts.

John xx. 19—22. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week—came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them: Peace be unto you—As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost:" that is, he encouraged them to rely upon him for the fulfilment of the promise he had made, that they should receive from above sufficient qualifications for the discharge of their high office. Which actually came to pass on the day of Pentecost next ensuing.

Acts i. 4, 5. "And being assembled together with them, he commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, Which, saith he, ye have heard of me." [Luke xxiv. 49.] "For John truly baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." Which cannot be understood of a person. The meaning therefore is: ye shall be favoured with a plentiful effusion of spiritual gifts. As the event likewise shows. See John i. 33. and Acts xi. 16.

Ver. 8. "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

Acts ii. 1—4. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one

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accord in one place—— And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance."

When all men wondered at this strange appearance, and some mocked; ver. 14—18. Peter, standing up says, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and my handmaidens I will pour out my spirit, and they shall prophesy."

Ver. 33. "Therefore being by the right hand of God, exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth, [or poured out,] this, which ye now see and hear."

Ver. 38. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized— in the name of Jesus Christ:—and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Acts iv. 8. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel——"

—Ver. 21. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. And they spake the word with boldness. Ver. 33. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon all."

Acts iv. 3. "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business." Ver. 5. "And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, and Philip." Ver. 8. "And Stephen full of faith and power did great wonders and miracles among the people." Ver. 9. "Then there arose certain,—disputing with Stephen." Ver. 10. "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."

Acts viii. 14. "Now when the apostles, which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John." Ver. 15. "Who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for as yet he was fallen upon none of them. Only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Ver. 17. "Then laid they their hands on them; and they received the Holy Ghost." Ver. 18. "And when Simon saw, that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Gost was *given*, he offered them money." And what follows.

Acts x. 44. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Ver. 45. "And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." Ver. 46. "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." Ver. 47. "Then answered Peter: Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

Acts xi. 16, 17. "Forasmuch then, as God gave them the like gift, as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus; what was I, that I could withstand God?" Ch. xv. 18. And God, which knows the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, as he did unto us."

I have omitted Acts ix. 17. and x. 38, for the sake of brevity, and as not being necessary to be now insisted upon. The paragraph in Acts xix. 1—7. will be considered hereafter among the texts that are to be explained.

Rom. v. 5. "And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us."

Tit. iii. 5, 6.—"according to his mercy he has saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us, [has poured out upon us, ου εξεχεεν εφ ημας,] abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

Heb. ii. 4. "God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will."

"And gifts of the Holy Ghost." It should be rather rendered, and distributions of the Holy Ghost: και πνευματος αγιου μερισμοις. A remarkable expression, plainly declaring that by the Holy Ghost, or the Holy Spirit, was meant those spiritual gifts which came down upon men from heaven immediately, or were communicated in great variety, by the laying on of the hands of the apostles.

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Heb. vi. 4.—" those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost."—— τους απαξ φωτισθεντας, γευσαμενους τε της δωρεας της επουρανιου, και μετοχους γενηθεντας πνευματος αγιου.

Dr. Whitby's paraphrase is this: 'and having tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made 'partakers of the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, and conferred on them by the imposition 'of hands.'

Learned interpreters are not agreed in the meaning of the heavenly gift. To me it seems that by both these expressions, one and the same thing is intended, even the Holy Ghost: and that the writer of this epistle calls it the heavenly gift, in allusion to the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles and their company on the day of Pentecost, as related Acts ii. 1—13.

But though commentators do not agree in their interpretation of the first particular, I suppose, that by the Holy Ghost they generally understand miraculous powers and gifts, of which persons here spoken of had partaken. So Whitby, as just cited. So likewise Grotius. Subjicit etiam 'participes fuisse spiritus sancti,' id est, dona consecutos prophetiæ, linguarum, sanationum, quæ non contingebant eo tempore nisi justificatis, id est, purgatis. Grot. in loc. Du saint esprit.] Des dons miraculeux. Le Clerc.

1 Pet. i. 12. " Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel to you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

Here I suppose to be a plain reference to the plentiful effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, as related by St. Luke at the beginning of the book of the Acts. It is probable, that many of the Christians, to whom St. Peter is here writing, were converted by St. Paul, who was not present with the rest on that memorable day. Nevertheless he had received the Spirit in a very plentiful measure, and immediately from heaven, without the intervention of any of those who were apostles before him. It is also very likely that St. Peter himself, and some others of the twelve, had been in these countries before his writing this epistle. For, not now to mention St. John, who perhaps did not take up his abode at Ephesus, till after the writing this epistle of Peter, I think we have good evidence that [a] Philip, one of the twelve apostles, resided for some time, and died at Hierapolis in Phrygia. And it may be reckoned probable, that he was for a while very useful in preaching the gospel in those parts, and that he wrought miracles among the people there.

By the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, I suppose to be meant the inspiration of the apostles, and the miraculous powers and gifts with which they were endowed.

Res illæ magnæ nobis plene explicatæ sunt per apostolos, et eorum adjutores, 'cœlitus donatos spiritu sancto,' id est, donis majoribus, quam ipsi prophetæ habuere, et de quibus ipsi prophetæ sunt locuti, ut Joel ii. 28. Grot. in loc.

1 John iv. 13. " Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit:" οτι εκ του πνευματος αυτου δεδωκεν ημιν. And see ch. ii. 20.

In these texts the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, is oftentimes spoken of as a gift. And there is a variety of expressions, such as giving, pouring out, falling upon men, receiving, and being filled with, the Holy Ghost; which import a gift, a power, a privilege and blessing, rather than a person.

To all which may be added, fourthly, that in the epistles of the New Testament there are at the beginning, and elsewhere, wishes of peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, but none from the Spirit distinctly. Nor are there any doxologies, or ascriptions of glory to the Spirit distinctly, though there are several such ascriptions to God and Christ, or to God through Christ.

Rom. i. 7. " To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." So also 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Gal. i. 3. Eph. i. 2. and elsewhere. And Eph. vi. 13. " Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Some of the doxologies are these: Rom. xi. 36. " For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. Ch. xvi. 27. " To God only wise be

[a] Vid. Euseb. H. E. l. 3. c. 31. l. 5. cap. 24. in Hieron. de V. I. cap. 45. Polycrates.

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glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen." See Eph. iii. 20, 21. Philip. iv. 8. "Now unto God, even our Father, be glory for ever and ever." See 1 Tim. i. 17. Heb. xiii. 20, 21. "Now the God of peace——make you perfect,——through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." 1 Pet. iv. 11. "That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ: to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." 2 Pet. iii. 18. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; to him be glory both now and ever. Amen." And see Jude, ver. 24, 25. Rev. i. 5, 6. "Unto him that loved us, and redeemed us from our sins by his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." See also Rev. iv. 9—11. v. 12, 13. vii. 10.

I quote no other books as of authority, beside the books of scripture commonly received by Christians, as of divine original. Nevertheless I may observe by way of illustration, that the wishes of peace, and the doxologies[c] in the most early Christian writers, are agreeable to those in the epistles of the New Testament, which have been just now alleged.

The epistle of Clement, written in the name of the church of Rome to the church of Corinth, begins in this manner. 'Grace and peace be multiplied unto you from God Almighty through 'Jesus Christ.'

In this epistle are several doxologies. And they are all ascribed to God, or Christ, or to God through Christ.

The conclusion of the epistle is in these words: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, and with all every where, who are called by God through him: through whom to him be glory, honour, might, majesty, and everlasting dominion, for ever and ever. Amen."

The epistle of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, which is sent to the Philippians, is inscribed in this manner: 'Polycarp, and the presbyters that are with him, to the church of God which is 'at Philippi. Mercy and peace be multiplied unto you from God Almighty, and from the Lord 'Jesus Christ our Saviour.'

In the twelfth chapter, or section of that epistle are these expressions. 'Now the God and 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he himself, who is our everlasting high priest, the Son 'of God, Jesus Christ, build you up in faith and truth, meekness and patience.'

A catholic author, supposed to have lived about the year of Christ 220, and writing against heretics, says: 'There is, indeed, one God, whom we can know no otherwise, but from the holy 'scriptures.——Whatever therefore the divine scriptures declare, that let us embrace: what they 'teach, let us learn. And as the Father willeth we should believe, so let us believe: as he willeth 'the Son should be honoured, so let us honour him: as[a] he willeth the Holy Ghost should be 'given, so let us accept.'

Jerom says, 'that[b] Lactantius in his epistles, especially those to Demetrian, denies the per-'sonality of the Holy Ghost: referring him, and his operations, as the Jews also erroneously do, 'to the Father, or the Son.'

And in another place he says, that[c] this was the sentiment of many Christians in his own time, who did not understand the scriptures.

The bishops in the council of Nice, having declared the doctrine concerning God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, add: 'And in the Holy Ghost:' that is: 'And we believe in the 'Holy Ghost.'

It follows in the same creed, as it is exhibited in the liturgy of the Church of England: 'The Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father 'and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.' But that is not in the creed of the council of Nice, which sat in the year of our Lord 325, but it is taken from the creed of the council of Constantinople, which was convened in the year 381. Or, as it is more accurately expressed by Bishop Burnet at the beginning of his exposition of the eighth article of the church

[a] ——και ὡς θελει πνευμα ἁγιον δωρεισθαι, λαζωμεν. Hippolyt. contr. Noët. § ix. p. 12. ap. Fabr. T. II.

[b] Lactantius, in epistolis suis, et maxime in epistolis ad Demetrianum, Spiritûs Sancti negat substantiam, et errore Judaïco dicit eum vel ad Patrem referri, vèl ad Filium, et sanctificationem utriusque personæ sub nomine ejus demonstrari. Hieron. ad Pamm. et Oc. ep. 41. al. 65. T. IV. p. 345.

[c] Hoc ideo: quia multi per imperitiam scripturarum (quod et Firmianus in octavo ad Demetrianum epistolarum libro fecit) asserunt, Spiritum sanctum sæpe Patrem sæpe Filium nominari. Et cum perspicue in Trinitate credamus, tertiam personam auferentes, non substantiam ejus volunt esse, sed nomen. Id. in Galat. cap. iv. ver. 6. T. IV. P. I. p. 268.

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of England: 'So that the creed, here called the Nice-creed, is indeed the Constantinopolitan 'creed, together with the addition of Filioque, made by the western church.'

I might add a great deal more from the writers of the first three centuries. But this is not a place for enlargement. What has been already said, may be sufficient to render it probable, that the doctrine of the Trinity, which is now commonly received, and which is so much disliked by many, was not formed all at once, but was the work of several ages.

SECTION II.

OBJECTIONS. But it may be objected, that the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, is oftentimes spoken of as a person, and especially in St. John's gospel.

John xiv. 16, 17. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. But ye know him. For he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

——Ver. 25, 26. "These things have I spoken unto you, being present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

John xvi. 7. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I will send him unto you"——Ver. 12. "I have yet many things to say unto you. But ye cannot bear them now." Ver. 13. "Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself. But whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak. And he will show you things to come." Ver. 14. "He shall glorify me. For he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Ver. 15. "All things that the Father hath are mine. Therefore said I, that he shall take of mine: and shall show it unto you."

In answer to which several things may be said.

1. It is not uncommon, in the language of scripture, to personalize many things, to which we do not ascribe intelligence.

The book of Proverbs, where wisdom is brought in speaking, as a person, is a well-known and remarkable instance. So likewise in the New Testament death reigns. Rom. v. 14, 17. and is an enemy. 1 Cor. xv. 26, 55—57. And sin is spoken of as a lord and master, and pays wages, and that in opposition to God, the most perfect agent. Rom. vi. 12. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." 14. "For sin shall not have dominion over you." 17. "Ye were once the servants of sin"——23. "For the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And how many things are done by charity, as described by St. Paul! 1 Cor. xiii. "It suffereth long, and is kind, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and the like.

I might quote here many other texts. Judg. xxiv. 26, 27. "And Joshua took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak——And Joshua said unto all the people: Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us: for it has heard all the words of the Lord, which he spake unto us. It shall therefore be a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God."

John xii. 48. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, has one that judgeth him. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last day."

Let me recite here the words of a pious and learned English writer.* 'To conclude this point, 'the sum of our Saviour's preaching consists in inculcating this one great and fundamental truth 'of Christianity: that "we are nothing, and God is all in all." It is his word that enlightens 'our minds, his Spirit directs our wills, his providence orders our affairs, his grace guides us here, 'and his mercy must bring us to heaven hereafter.'

Why is God's spirit a person more than his providence, or his grace, or mercy? We know,

* Directions for profitable reading the Holy Scriptures. By William Lowth, p. 100.

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that by these last this writer does not intend persons, though he ascribes to them the guidance of us, or other actions. In the Jewish language, and among the Jewish people, spirit would no more signify a person, than grace or mercy. Nor were they more likely to ascribe distinct personality to the spirit, than we to the grace, or mercy, or providence of God.

2. There is not in the Acts of the apostles, or in any other book of the New Testament, any account of the appearance and manifestation of a great agent, or person, after our Saviour's ascension: therefore no such thing was promised or intended by our Saviour, nor expected by the apostles, who could not but know his meaning.

3. In other texts of scripture, and particularly in St. John's gospel, by the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, is meant a gift, or a plentiful effusion of spiritual gifts. I intend John iii. 34. vii. 39. xx. 22, which were alleged not long ago.

4. Our Saviour himself has explained what he meant by "the Comforter."

So it is in one of those texts, upon which this objection is founded. John xiv. 26. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," or, more literally, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost. Ο δε παρακλητος, το πνευμα το αγιον. But by the Holy Ghost, in other places of this gospel, as well as in many other texts of the New Testament, is not meant, as we have plainly seen, a powerful agent, but the Divine Influence, or the effusion of spiritual gifts. This therefore is what our Lord intended by the Comforter. And this sense is confirmed by the book of the Acts, wherein is recorded the fulfilment of our Saviour's promise.

5. Our blessed Lord, in speaking of this matter, has made use of a variety of expressions: by attending to which we may clearly discern his true meaning in what he says of the Comforter.

Matt. xxviii. 20. "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." In John xiv. 16. lately quoted, he says: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." One and the same thing is intended in both places.

In the texts of St. John's gospel, upon which this objection is built, our Saviour speaks of the teachings of the spirit, whereby the disciples would be enlightened, and led into a clear discernment of his scheme of religion. But in John xvi. 25, are these expressions. "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs. The time cometh, when I shall no more speak to you in proverbs, [or parables:] but I shall show you plainly of the Father." Here our Lord speaks of those teachings as his own.

In Matt. x. 20, it is said: "For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." To the like purpose in Mark xiii. 11. and Luke xii. 12. But in Luke xxi. 15, our Lord expresseth himself in this manner. "For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay, nor resist."

Mark xvi. 19, 20. "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them," or the Lord co-operating, τω κυριω συνεργουντος, and confirming the word with signs following. Here the miracles of the apostles, after his ascension, are ascribed to our Lord himself, or his powerful presence and influence.

Acts ix. 17, 18. "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house: and putting his hands upon him, said: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales. And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

Acts ix. 32—34. "And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints, which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him: Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole. Arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately."

I might refer also to Acts iii. 6. iv. 10—12. But I forbear.

However, I shall add a few other texts from the epistles, which I think are to the present purpose, and may deserve to be considered.

Rom. xii. 3. "For I say, through the grace given to me, to every man that is among you—— to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Ver. 6. "Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us."

Eph. iii. 6, 7. "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs——and partakers of his promise in

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Christ by the gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of his power."

Eph. iv. 7. "But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ"——Ver. 11, 12, "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God: if any man minister, let him do it, as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To whom be praise and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen."

And 1 Cor. xii. 6. St. Paul says: "There are diversities of operations: but it is the same God which worketh all in all." And at ver. 28. "God hath sent some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles——."

All which seems to show, that by the spirit is to be understood that special influence, which, in different measures and proportions, God vouchsafes to men through Jesus Christ, for their own comfort and establishment, and for spreading the great truths of religion in the world.

Luke xxiv. 49. "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

This power, this divine influence, this effusion of knowledge, and other spiritual gifts, our Lord calls "the Comforter," or the Advocate, παράκλητος, as thereby their cause would be pleaded with men, and they would be justified in their preaching boldly in the name of Jesus Christ.

This gift, this divine influence, he calls also "the spirit of truth," because by that wonderful influence on their minds the apostles would be led into the knowledge of all the truths of the gospel, and would be enabled to teach them to others with perspicuity.

And our Lord speaks of the Spirit's "bringing to their remembrance" the things, which he had said, and of his "receiving of his, and showing it unto them:" because by this miraculous influence upon their minds, those prejudices would be removed, which had obstructed their clear discernment of what Christ had said unto them, while he was with them.

There are other texts from which objections may be raised. But they may be as well considered in the next section. And I think, that will be the shortest method.

SECTION III.

TEXTS EXPLAINED. 1 Luke xi. 13. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Which is parallel with Matt. vii. 11. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?" Whereby we may perceive, that by the Holy Spirit is meant any good thing, conducive to our real happiness. And we are induced to recollect here what St. James says, i. 5. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. And it shall be given to him." And see ver. 17.

2. Matt. iv. 1. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." Mark i. 12. "And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness." Luke iv. 1. "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."

The coherence will lead us into the true meaning of these words. Our blessed Lord had just been baptized, and the Holy Ghost descended from heaven, and abode upon him. At the same time he was solemnly inaugurated, and publicly declared to be the Messiah. There came a voice from heaven, saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Now therefore was fulfilled the prophecy in Is. xi. 1, 2. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might"——By that divine and extraordinary wisdom, our Lord was directed, and influenced, to retire into the wilderness. And having been there tempted of Satan, and having vanquished him, as St. Luke says, ch. iv. 14, 15.

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" Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee," fully qualified for the discharge of his high office, both for teaching his excellent doctrine, and for confirming it by miracles. " And there went out a fame of him through all the regions round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." So our Lord said to his disciples, as recorded Acts i. 8. " Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Or, as it is in the margin of some of our Bibles: " Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you."

3. Matt. xii. 31. " Wherefore I say unto you: All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men. But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." And see ver. 32. Compare also Mark iii. and Luke xii.

Dr. Wall, who upon John xvi. 13. p. 113. asserts the personality of the Spirit, explains this text of St. Matthew after this manner, p. 15. ' A man that sees plainly the effects of a present ' supernatural power, which, he must be convinced in conscience, is the finger, or spirit, or im- ' mediate miraculous power of God: (which is that, which is here called the Holy Spirit, or ' Holy Ghost:) and yet will maliciously blaspheme, or speak blasphemous words against it: ' that it is the devil, or that the devil helps the man that does it: such an one blasphemes God ' himself, showing himself, or his miraculous power, at that time from heaven.'

' In Luke xi. 20. What is here called " the Holy Ghost," is there called " the finger of God." ' And so the Egyptian magicians, when convinced, called it. Ex. viii. 19.'

Afterwards, in the same note, at p. 16, he says: ' In Acts ii. 13. there was a miraculous ' power of God, enabling the apostles to speak with tongues. Some, who did not conceive it to ' be any spirit, or miraculous power, mocked at it. These were not denounced to be in any un- ' pardonable state.'

Nothing more needs to be said for the explication of that text in St. Matthew, and the parallel places in the other gospels.

4. Matt. xxviii. 19. " Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." ' That is, Go ye therefore into all the ' world, and teach, or disciple all nations, baptizing them into the profession of faith in, and ' an obligation to obey the doctrine taught by Christ, with authority from God the Father, and ' confirmed by the Holy Ghost.'[a]

By the Holy Ghost, as I apprehend, we are here to understand the miracles of our Saviour's ministry, and likewise the miracles wrought by his apostles, and the spiritual gifts bestowed upon the apostles, and other disciples of Jesus, and all believers in general, soon after our Lord's ascension, and all the miraculous attestations of the truth and divine original of the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ.

It is observable, that the baptismal form, which is in St. Matthew, never appears in those very words, either in the book of the Acts, or in any of the Epistles. But men are required to be " baptized in the name of Christ," or said to have been " baptized into Christ." That is, they made a profession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, and acknowledged their obligation to obey him, by being baptized. Acts ii. 38. " Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Ch. viii. 16. " Only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." See likewise ver. 35—38. Rom. vi. 3. " Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" Gal. iii. 27. " For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

But though the form which is in St. Matthew, never appears elsewhere, the thing intended thereby is always implied. Nor could any be brought to make a profession of faith in Jesus, as the Christ, but upon the supposition that he had taught in the name and with the authority of God the Father, and had proved his commission by miraculous attestations, which could not be denied nor gainsayed.

5. John xvi. 7. " Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away.

[a] '" Baptizing [them with water,] in the name of the ' Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" that is, ' receiving them to a profession of the belief of, and an obli- ' gation to the practice of that religion, which God the Father ' has revealed and taught by the Son, and confirmed and es- ' tablished by the Holy Ghost.' Dr. Clarke's Paraphrase.

' The true meaning is, baptizing into the profession of ' that doctrine, which is the mind and counsel of God the ' Father, made known to mankind by the Son, and confirmed ' by the mighty operations of the Holy Ghost.' Mr. Jo. Bur- roughs's two Discourses on positive Institutions, p. 41.

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For if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you:" which agrees with what our Lord says, John vii. 37—39. and with the evangelist's own remark; "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

The fitness and wisdom of deferring the plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost for illuminating the apostles, and removing their prejudices, and enabling them to teach the doctrine of Christ with perspicuity, and to confirm it by wonderful works, must be apparent to all who consider what evidence was thereby afforded to the truth of their testimony concerning the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

Ver. 8—11. "And when he is come, he will reprove, [or convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me: of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more: of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

If we recollect the many texts which have been already alleged, and particularly what our Lord says in John vii. 37—39. just now taken notice of, we shall find no great difficulty in understanding this text.

"And when he is come." It is not to be hence argued, that the Holy Ghost had never come before. But hereby is meant a certain coming, a plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost, foretold by the prophets, and by our Lord.

The Spirit had in former times come upon Moses and the prophets. For, as St. Peter says, 2 Epist. i. 21. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

And after a long withdrawing of the Spirit of God, or withholding extraordinary powers and gifts, from the Jewish people, about the time of our Saviour's nativity, we see divers instances of the divine influence and operation in Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, and Elizabeth, and Anna, and Simeon, and then on John the Baptist; who undoubtedly taught, and preached, and prophesied by the Holy Ghost, though he did no miracles. The Holy Spirit came down also upon our Lord in a glorious manner, and there were visible tokens of it: whereby John knew him to be the Messiah, the great person, who was to come: and he had "the Spirit without measure," John iii. 34. The Holy Ghost must likewise have been given, during the time of our Lord's abode on this earth, in a certain measure, upon several, particularly the twelve apostles, and the seventy other disciples, in order to qualify them for the discharge of the commission, which our Lord gave them for a time, to go over the cities of Judea, and prepare men for him. And of the seventy it is expressly said, "they returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the dæmons are subject to us through thy name," Luke x. 17.

"By the coming of the Holy Ghost," then, is to be understood, in this place, a general and plentiful effusion of spiritual gifts upon the apostles themselves, and upon other believers in the Lord Jesus, such as that related in the Acts: when the disciples, who had followed the Lord in the time of his ministry, and still continued together, and afterwards many others likewise, were enabled on a sudden to speak in divers languages, which they had never learned, and to perform many great and extraordinary works in the name of Jesus Christ.

Indeed this coming of the Comforter, or the Holy Ghost, comprehends in it all manner of spiritual gifts; not only those just mentioned, but also a clear and distinct knowledge of divine things, even the truths of the doctrine of Christ, and the whole scheme of the gospel dispensation: and prophesying, or foretelling things to come, as well as working miracles, and also readiness of speech, and a becoming degree of courage and boldness in the midst of dangers, and in the presence of the greatest personages; qualifications, of which the disciples had been hitherto very destitute.

The several particulars, sin, righteousness, and judgment, of which the world would be convinced by the plentiful effusion of the Spirit, here spoken of, need not to be distinctly explained. The sum is, that hereby the progress of the Gospel would be secured. This large and general effusion of spiritual gifts would be a persuasive and satisfactory evidence of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and that he was the promised Messiah, through whom all nations of the earth were to be blessed. Or, as John the Baptist expresseth it: And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me: Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God," John i. 33, 34.

And with great force, as well as propriety, do the apostles say to the Jewish council, as re-

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corded Acts v. 29—32. "Then Peter, and the [other] apostles said: We ought to obey God, rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince, and a saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things. And so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey him: 'That is, say those judicious com-'mentators, Lenfant and Beausobre, 'the miraculous gifts which Jesus had bestowed upon his 'apostles, and which they conferred upon believers.'

6. Acts i. 2.——"after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles, whom he had chosen."

Or, as in the Syriac, version,[b] "after that he had given commandments to the apostles, whom he had chosen by the Holy Spirit:" that is, by special direction from heaven. Which is very agreeable to what St. Luke writes, chap. vi. 12, 13. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God:" or, in an oratory of God. "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples. And of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." Indeed a right choice of the apostles of Christ depended upon no less than infinite wisdom. And when another was to be added to the eleven, after the apostasy, and "death of Judas, they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said: Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show, whether of these two thou hast chosen." Acts i. 23, 24.

7. Acts v. 3, 4. "Then Peter said: Ananias, why has Satan filled thy heart, to lie unto the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?—Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God—Then Peter said unto her: [Sapphira] How is it that ye have agreed together, to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?"

They tempted the Spirit of the Lord. They acted, as if they had doubted of the divine omniscience, like the Israelites in the wilderness, of whom it is said, Psal. lxxviii. 18, 19, 20. "And they tempted God in their heart, by asking meat for their lust. They said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?—Can he give bread also? Can he provide flesh for his people?" And as the apostles were plainly under an extraordinary divine influence and direction, when Ananias and Sapphira attempted to impose upon them by a false account, they were justly said to lie to God himself, and not to men only.

Athanasius, speaking of this matter, says: 'So [c] that he who lied to the Holy Spirit, lied 'unto God, who dwells in men by his Spirit. For where the Spirit of God is, there is God. 'As it is said: "Hereby know we, that God dwelleth in us, because he has given us of his 'spirit." 1 John iv. 33.

8. Acts viii. 18, 19. "And when Simon saw, that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying: "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."

Mr. Le Moine explains this text in his treatise on miracles, p. 189. 'And when he saw, 'that through laying on of their hands, the Holy Ghost, or the power of working miracles, was 'given, he offered them money, to have the same power.'

So then the Holy Ghost, which was bestowed upon believers by the apostles, was the power of miracles, or an extraordinary power, by which the believers might perform miraculous works.

9. Acts ix. 31. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied.

What is here said of the churches does in a great measure coincide with what we find in chap. ii. 42, 43, and 46, 47.

—"and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." *εν τη παρακλησει τυ αγιυ πνευματος.* Which might

[a] 'Le S. Esprit.'] Ce sont les dons miraculeux, dont J. C. avoit revêtu ses Apôtres, et qu'ils conféroient aux fidèles. Act. ii. 33. viii. 15, 17. Note sur les Actes des Apôtres. Chap. v. ver. 32.

[b] Act. i. 2. Verba, *δια πνευματος ἁγιυ*, quæ plerique ad *εντειλαμενος* referunt, construxit Syrus cum *εξελεξατο*: 'quos [apostolos] elegerat per Spiritum Sanctum'——Ex mente Syri interpretis hoc dicit Lucas: Christum non ex suâ voluntate apostolos legisse, sed ex nutu Patris, qui per Spiritum Sanctum tanto munere dignos candidatos Filio demonstraverit. J. D. Michaëlis Curæ in Versionem Syriacam Actuum Apostolorum, p. 1.

[c] *Ὡσε ὁ ψευσαμενος τῳ αγιῳ πνευματι, τῳ θεῳ ἐψευσατο τῳ κατοικουντι εν ανθρωποις δια τυ πνευματος αυτυ. Ὁτυ γαρ εστι το πνευμα θευ, εκει εστιν ὁ θεος.* κ. λ. Athan. De Incarnat. et cont. Arian. n. 13. p. 881. A.

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be rendered the patronage or assistance of the Holy Ghost: agreeable to what our Lord had promised the disciples, as recorded John xiv. 16.

These words therefore may be now paraphrased in this manner. 'Then had the churches, 'in the several countries here mentioned, peace and tranquillity, being freed from the persecu- 'tion, with which they had been disturbed, and were more and more confirmed in the faith. 'And continuing in the devout worship of God, and in the steady and amiable practice of vir- 'tue, and likewise exercising the miraculous gifts and powers, with which they had been fa- 'voured, they were greatly increased with the addition of numerous converts.'

Accordingly, there follows in the remaining part of the chapter an account of Peter's passing throughout divers places, and coming, particularly, to Lydda, where he healed Eneas, who had been long sick of the palsy. "And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, [recovered,] and turned unto the Lord." Afterwards Peter went to Joppa, where he raised to life Tabitha, otherwise named Dorcas. "And it was known throughout Joppa: and many believed in the Lord."

10. Acts xiii. 1—4. "Now there were in the church that is at Antioch certain prophets and teachers, as Barnabas, and Simeon that is called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said: Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted, and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia, and thence they sailed to Cyprus."

'That is, whilst those prophets and teachers were engaged with others in the public worship 'of God, it [a] was revealed unto some of them, that they should set apart Barnabas and Saul to 'a certain work, for which God had designed them. Which they did with prayer, and fasting, 'and laying on of their hands. And being sent forth by that special appointment of heaven, 'they went to Seleucia, and thence they sailed to the island of Cyprus.'

This text, compared with others, may cast light upon them, and be illustrated by them.

Acts xx. 22, 23. "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me." That is, God had declared as much by the mouth of Christian prophets, in several cities, through which the apostle had already passed. Which is agreeable to what St. Luke says more particularly in the account of what happened at Cesarea. ch. xxi. 10, 11. "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he came unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said: Thus saith the Holy Ghost: So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

St. Paul speaks of Timothy's having been ordained out of a regard to some prophecies concerning him. 1 Tim. i. 18. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before concerning thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare." And ch. iv. 14. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

There were prophets, who, when under inspiration, had said some things to the advantage of Timothy: by which the apostle had been encouraged to bestow upon him eminent gifts, and to instate him in an important and useful office.

This enables us also to understand what is said Acts xx. 28. "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers." They had been made bishops by some, who were inspired, or who had been directed in their choice by persons speaking with inspiration.

So Barnabas and Saul were sent out from Antioch, according to prophecy, with an important commission. But their designation may have been more express and solemn, than that of the others, just taken notice of by us.

11. Acts xv. 28. "For it seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you

[a] ——'dixit Spiritus Sanctus.] Per prophetas. Grot. in loc.

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no greater burden, than these necessary things: that is, [a] 'It has seemed good to us, who have 'the spirit of God, or are inspired.'

12. Acts xix. 1—6. "And it came to pass, that whilst Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coast, came to Ephesus. And finding certain disciples, he said unto them: Have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye believed? And they said unto him: We have not so much as heard, whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them: Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said: Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul: John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve."

In the preceding chapter, ver. 24, 25. we are informed of "a Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, who came to Ephesus,—knowing only the baptism of John." This likewise was the case of the men here spoken of. They were in Judea when John preached, or when he began to preach, and left it before our Lord appeared publicly. Or else they had been instructed by Apollos, or some other such person, who was not fully acquainted with the doctrine of Christ. And they knew nothing of the preaching of the apostles, and other transactions at Jerusalem, and in Judea, after our Lord's ascension.

Dr. Wall's explication of ver. 2. Critical Notes upon the N. T. p. 164. is this: 'We have 'not so much as heard, whether there be any such powers of prophesying, speaking with 'tongues, &c. granted to those that believe.'

Which interpretation seems to me to be very right. These men did not know, or had not heard, that there was then any general pouring out of the Holy Ghost, in which they could partake. They might know, that a general effusion of extraordinary gifts had been foretold by the prophets, as the privilege of the days of the Messiah. But they had not heard, or been informed by any, that such a thing was yet vouchsafed to men: so far were they from having received it themselves.

And I should think, it must appear evident to all, that in this paragraph, the Holy Ghost, wherever mentioned, that is, in Paul's question, in the answer made by these men, and the apostle's following action, denotes a power, a blessing, a privilege, and not a person.

Miraculous gifts being then very common, and generally bestowed upon those, who professed faith in Jesus Christ, St. Paul meeting with these men at Ephesus, asks them: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him: We have not so much as heard, that there is any Holy Ghost. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied: that is, when he had laid his hands upon them, they received miraculous powers, and immediately spake with tongues and prophesied.

I shall place below, in the margin, the observations of [b] Grotius, and [c] Witsius upon this text, who speak to the same purpose, or not very differently.

13. Rom. xiv. 17. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The last clause, which should now be explained by me, has been differently understood. Whitby, in his annotations, says, 'it signifies an inward joy, arising from the consolations of the 'Holy Ghost.' And Le Clerc, 'The inward satisfaction, which we enjoy, when we live accord-

[a] 'Visum est enim Spiritui Sancto, et nobis.'] Id est, nobis per Spiritum Sanctum. ἐν διὰ δυοιν. Grot. in loc.

Adeo ut verborum sensus esse videatur: nobis, qui Spiritu Sancto donati sumus, visum est. Limboreh. in Act. Apost. p. 152. fin.

[b] 'Si Spiritum Sanctum accepistis credentes?'] Spiritus Sanctus hic, et in sequentibus, ita ut Johannis vii. 39. sunt dona ista Ecclesiæ Christianæ reservata; quæ Paulus haud dubium quin pluribus vocibus descripserit.

'Sed neque si Spiritus Sanctus est, audivimus.'] Non audivimus dari nunc talia dona. Grot. ad Act. xix. 2.

[c] Quos interrogat, 'ecquid Spiritum Sanctum accepissent 'postquam crediderunt.' Illi vero negant, audivisse, se 'sitne 'Spiritus Sanctus.' Respondent ex catechesi majorum, quâ edocti erant, a morte Ezræ, Haggæi, Zachariæ, et Malachiæ, Spiritum Sanctum ab Israëlitis esse ablatum. Porro, restitutum esse, negant sibi compertum. Palam est, non de personâ Spiritûs S. sed de singularibus et visibilibus illius donis utrimque sermonem esse. Wits. De Vitâ Pauli, Sect. viii. p. 107.

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'ing to the spirit of the gospel.' Mr. Locke, 'Joy in the gifts and benefits of the Holy Ghost 'under the gospel.'

But Grotius hereby understands [a] 'a care and concern to exhilarate others, by the gifts of 'the spirit.' And considers it as opposed to the grieving, offending, provoking our brother, spoken of, and cautioned against at ver. 15.

That this is the apostle's intention, appears, I think, from the whole argument in this chapter, and in the beginning of the next, and particularly from the nearest context, both before and after. Peace is not inward quiet of mind, but peaceableness, a love and study of peace, and doing all in our power to secure and promote it. Nor does the apostle speak of the joy which we possess ourselves, but of that which we ought to give to others. So likewise Gal. v. 22. "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering." Where joy is joined with other virtues and duties toward our neighbour: and cannot mean the satisfaction which we feel ourselves, but the satisfaction which we procure to others.

St. Paul then here says, 'The kingdom of God does not consist in such things as meat and 'drink, but in the practice of righteousness, in a love and study of peace, and care to please and 'edify our brother by a mild and condescending behaviour, and discourses suited to his capacity, 'according to the doctrine of the gospel, confirmed by mighty works, and many miraculous gifts 'and powers bestowed upon believers in general.' Therefore he offers that earnest prayer, chap. xv. 5. "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded according to Christ Jesus." That is according to the will and command of Christ.

14. In the twelfth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians the apostle has a long argument about spiritual gifts, or spiritual persons, as some understand the expression in ver. 1. Περι δε των πνευματικων. Here, undoubtedly, are some personalizing expressions. As ver. 11. "But all these worketh that one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every one severally, as he will." But then there are other expressions, by which he shows that by the Spirit he means a blessing, a gift, a power.

Ver. 7. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal:" 'That is, but the plentiful effusion of spiritual gifts, with which the church of God is now 'favoured, is designed for general good. And every one is to exercise his own particular gift 'in the way most conducive to the advantage of his brethren in Christ.'

And ver. 13. "For by one spirit, are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free. And have been all made to drink into one spirit." So we translate the words: but I suppose they might be better rendered in this manner. [b] "For we have all been baptized with one [c] spirit, that we might be one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and we have been all made to drink into one spirit." All believers in Jesus Christ, of every nation and people, of every rank and condition, had received the like or selfsame spiritual gifts, that they might reckon themselves to be, and behave as one body; being all united together in love and friendship, in communion and worship. Moreover in the same context the apostle says, ver. 6. "And there are diversities of operations: but it is the same God which worketh all in all." And ver. 28. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

Many interpreters have supposed, that in the phrase, "and have been all made to drink into one spirit," the apostle alludes to the eucharistical cup. But I do not perceive any good ground for it. I think the apostle carries on the same allusion. Men were baptized with water. Receiving the spirit in a plentiful effusion is called being baptized with the spirit: and the spirit is compared to water. John vii. 37—39. and see Is. xliv. 3. Joel ii. 18. and elsewhere. I think the apostle compares the Spirit, or the plentiful effusion of spiritual powers and gifts, such as

[a] Cura exhilarandi alios per dona spiritûs sancti, non autem eos irritandi, quod modo dixit λυπειν. Grot. in loc.

Limborch, in his commentary upon the epistle to the Romans, largely asserts the same sense. Beausobre likewise, in a few words, finely illustrates the text after this interpretation. I would also refer to Mr. Joseph Morris's sermons, published in 1743, particularly his sermons upon 1 Thess. v. 16. "Rejoice evermore."

[b] Και γαρ εν ἑνι πνευματι ἡμεις παντες εις ἐν σωμα ἐβαπτισθημεν—και παντες εις ἐν πνευμα ἐποτισθημεν.

[c] Matt. iii. 11. "I indeed baptize you with water:—but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Αυτος ὑμας βαπτισει εν πνευματι ἁγιῳ, και πυρι.

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the church of Christ was then favoured with, to a fountain or river. We have all drank at, and been refreshed out of the same fountain.

The Syriac version of the last clause of this verse is: 'And we have all drank-in one spirit.' Et omnes nos unum Spiritum imbibimus. The Latin version may be also observed: Et omnes in uno Spiritu potati sumus.

15. I may take this opportunity, to consider the difficult words of the third verse of this chapter. "Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed, [or anathema:] and that no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." 'That is, you may be assured, that man is not inspired, whatever pretences 'he may make, who pronounces Jesus accursed. Nor can any man profess faith in Jesus, as 'the Christ and Lord of all, under God the Father, and recommend that faith to others, unless 'he has been himself made partaker of miraculous powers and gifts, or seen miraculous works 'performed by others in the name of Jesus.' St. John speaks to the like purpose. 1 Epistle, iv. 1—3.

16. 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. "Now the Lord is that spirit. And where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." Or, as others choose to render it, by the Lord the spirit. However, in both is the same sense.

Dr. Whitby will assist us in explaining these words. For in his Annotations upon ver. 7—11. of this chapter, he says: 'The glory of God, or of the Lord, in the Old Testament, imports a 'bright light, or flame included in a cloud, styled the cloud of glory. And because this, when-'ever it appeared, was a symbol of God's glorious presence, it is styled by the Jews Shechinah, 'the habitation. See Ex. xvi. 7, 10. ch. xl. 34. This glory, saith the author of Cosri, is the 'divine light, which God vouchsafeth to his people. By the Shechinah, says Elias, we under-'stand the Holy Spirit. As it is evident they do, in these sayings: The Shechinah will not 'dwell with sorrowful or melancholy men. The Shechinah will only dwell with a strong, rich, 'wise, and humble man. The Shechinah dwells with the meek. And the like.'

We should now observe the nearest context, from ver. 12. "Seeing then that we have such hope," or such confidence, and well-grounded assurance, we, the apostles of Christ, "use great plainness of speech," boldly preaching the pure gospel of Christ, without recommending to men the rituals of the law. Ver. 13. "And not as Moses, who put a vail over his face"— Ver. 14. "For until this day remaineth the vail untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament. Which vail is done away in Christ." Ver. 15. "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their hearts." Ver. 16. "Nevertheless, when it shall turn unto the Lord, the vail shall be taken away." Ver. 17. "Now the Lord is that spirit, and where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Here is throughout an allusion to the history of Moses, after his receiving from God, the second time, the two tables of the law in the mount.

Ex. xxxiv. 29—34. "And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai—that Moses wist not, that the skin of his face shone—And when Aaron, and all the children of Israel, saw Moses, behold the skin of his face shone. And they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them. And Aaron, and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him. And Moses talked with them. Afterwards all the children of Israel came nigh——And till Moses had done speaking unto them, he put a vail on his face. But when Moses went before the Lord, to speak with him, he took the vail off until he came out."

That is what the apostle alludes to, when he says, ver. 16, 17. "Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord," that is, when the Jews shall come to Christ, and believe in him, "the vail shall be taken away." For Moses, when he went in, to appear before the Lord, took off the vail. "Now the Lord is that spirit." The Lord Jesus is the glory of God: and by coming to him, we are as in the divine presence, and converse without a vail. Which is what is meant by those words: "And where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Then it follows in ver. 18. "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." 'But it is not now with us, as it was with the Israelites of old, who only saw the face 'of Moses through a vail, and received no derivation of his glory upon themselves; the bright-'ness of it, having been intercepted by the vail. No, it is not so with us. For now, we all,

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'both Jews and Gentiles, who are followers of Jesus, and the people of God, under the gospel-'dispensation, " with open, [or unvailed,] face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord," 'seeing a strong and lively impression of the divine glory in the person of Jesus Christ, and his 'gospel: and there being a bright, and clear, and strong refulgence of that glory upon us, " we 'are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord:" we are 'transformed into the same likeness, which is continually increasing and improving. And the 'impression, made upon us, is much the same, as if we were in the divine presence, and saw the 'glory of God, with as near and full a manifestation, as can be admitted in the present state.'

17. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. " The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

The last clause may imply a wish, that those Christians might continue to partake in miraculous gifts and powers. But we have observed, that sometimes by the Spirit, or Holy Spirit, may be understood any good things, conducive to men's real happiness. Compare Matt. vii. 11. with Luke xi. 13. And see Eph. i. 3. Prov. i. 23. In this place therefore we may suppose to be hereby meant a participation of, and communion in all the blessings of the gospel, and all other needful good things.

18. Eph. ii. 22. " In whom ye also are builded for an habitation of God through the spirit."

Dr. Jeremiah Hunt shall explain the text for us.[a]

'I think,' says he, 'there is an expression made use of in respect to all believers in the first 'age. " Ye are the habitation of God through the spirit." We, Christians, are the habitation 'of God's Shechinah, the people, among whom God dwells. He dwelt as a political king with 'the Jews, by a sensible symbol of his presence. He dwelt with Christian societies (when this 'doctrine was first planted) by those extraordinary gifts of the spirit. That is spoken of, in such 'terms, as are made use of, to express God's inhabiting among the people of Israel. He dwelt 'with the Jews in the tabernacle, and the temple. He dwelt with Christians, in the first esta-'blishment of this religion, by the extraordinary gifts, which he imparted to the apostles, who 'were to found his doctrine, and to establish it. Thus far, you see, we are free from enthusiasm.'

'I would farther observe, Christ promiseth those who believe in him, and keep his com-'mandments, that he would love them, and that his Father would love them, and that they would 'come, and make their abode with them. John xiv. 21, 23. These expressions have been used 'in a wrong sense by enthusiasts. But the phrases are scriptural, and easy to be understood. '" I will come, and dwell with you." There is a reference to the Shechinah, the divine glory. 'By the spiritual gifts, which the Father has given me power to confer, I will induce you to 'believe in me. You will then become the habitation of my Father. He will have communion 'or society with you, by those gifts, which he will enable me to impart, and by which that doc-'trine shall be confirmed, and established.'

There are divers other texts, where Christians are spoken of as the temple of God through the spirit. And in all of them there is an allusion to the presence of God among the Jewish people, and in the temple at Jerusalem.

1.) 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. " Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, which ye are."

2.) 1 Cor. vi. 19. " What, know ye not, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which ye have of God!"

3.) 2 Cor. vi. 16. " And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God: as God hath said: I will dwell in them, and walk in them: and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." See Lev. xxvi. 11, 12.

I would observe, that in the second of these three texts the apostle seems to speak of the spirit, as a gift: which, says he, ye have of God. Grotius says, that the Holy Ghost here is the same as the Shechinah. I shall place his note below.[b]

[a] See his Sermon upon Communion with God: on 1 John i. 6, 7. vol. III. p. 426, 427.

[b] 'Spiritus Sanctus' hic idem quod Shekinah ['Numen 'Divinum'] in templo. Totus homo 'templum Dei,' supra iii. 16, 17. Sed 'adytum' est mens hominis: animi cæteræ partes 'basilica templi:' corpus vero 'porticus,' cum subdialibus. Bene hunc locum explicat Tertullianus libro de Cultu Feminarum altero: 'Cum omnes templum simus Dei, 'illato in nos et consecrato Spiritu Sancto, ejus templi æditua 'et antistita Pudicitia est, quæ nihil immundum ac profanum

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And upon the third, the last cited text, "ye are the temple of the living God," he says: 'Where [a] God dwells, there is a temple. God dwells in good men by his spirit. They there-'fore are the temple of God. Nor is it without reason added 'living.' For the gods of the 'heathen were dead men.'

19. The commonness of spiritual gifts, and the ends and uses of them appear from many texts.

1.) Eph. i. 13. In whom "ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise:" or, with that Holy Spirit, which had been promised.

Upon which text Mr. Locke remarks in these words: 'The Holy Ghost was neither pro-'mised, nor given to the heathens, who were apostates from God, and enemies, but only to the 'people of God. And therefore the converted Ephesians having received it, might be assured 'thereby, that they were now the people of God, and might rest satisfied in this pledge of it.'

2.) Eph. ii. 18. "For through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father." 'For through him we are all encouraged in our access to the Father, and are persuaded of our 'acceptance with him: the like miraculous gifts, which can come from God only, having been 'bestowed equally upon Jews and Gentiles.'

3.) Eph. iv. 30. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption:" or rather, wherewith ye were sealed in the day of redemption.

The miraculous gifts and powers bestowed upon the Christian church, in its early days, are enumerated in several places. Rom. xii. 6—8. 1 Cor. xii. 1—11. 28—30. xiii. 1, 2. xiv. Eph. iv. 11, 12. And see Eph. v. 18—20. Col. iii. 16. 1 Thess. v. 19—21.

These gifts and powers, bestowed upon the apostles, and others, soon after our Lord's ascension, vindicated them, and justified their preaching in his name, and enabled them to do it with success.

The pouring out of such gifts upon Cornelius, and his company, in an extraordinary manner, immediately from heaven, satisfied the apostles, that Gentiles might be received into the church, as God's people, upon faith in Jesus Christ, without taking upon them the observation of the rituals of the law of Moses. Acts x. 44—48. xi. 15—18.

And gifts of the spirit were bestowed upon many with the imposition of the hands of the apostles. Which afforded great comfort to them, [b] as it satisfied them, that they were received by God, as his people and children. This appears in several texts. Some more of which shall be here alleged.

4.) Rom. i. 11. "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end you may be established." Comp. xv. 29.

5.) Rom. v. 5. "And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us."

6.) Rom. viii. 15—17. "For ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry: Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." See also ver. 23. And compare Gal. iv. 5—7.

7.) 1 Cor. vi. 11. "And such were some of you. But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God." 'That 'is, ye have been cleansed, and sanctified by the doctrine of Christ, and have been fully assured 'of your acceptance with God, by the spiritual gifts conferred upon you.'

8.) 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. "Now he which establisheth us with you, in Christ, and has anointed us, is God. Who has also sealed us, and given the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts.

9.) 2 Cor. xi. 4. For, if he that cometh to you, preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached: or, if ye receive another Spirit, which ye have not received: or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

'inferri sinat, ne Deus ille, qui inhabitat, inquinatam sedem 'offensus derelinquat.'

Οὐ εχετε απο θεω.] Spiritus ille a Deo est multo magis quam splendor ille, qui apparebat interdum inter Cherubinos. Constructio est Græca, quæ, relativo pronomini dat casum præcedentem. Grot. in loc.

[a] 'Vos enim estis templum Dei vivi.'] Templum est, ubi Deus habitat. In piis habitat Deus per Spiritum Sanctum. Sunt igitur templum Dei. Idem sensus 1 Cor. iii. 17. et vi. 19. Nec frustra addidit ζωντος, quia dii gentium erant homines mortui. Grot. in loc.

[b] Sic et dona illa Dei, puta prophetiæ, sanationes, linguæ, ejectiones dæmonum, certos reddebant credentes, de paternâ Dei in se benevolentiâ. Grot. in Eph. 1. 13.

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By "another spirit" the apostle cannot mean another intelligent agent: but must mean greater and more excellent spiritual gifts, than those which had been imparted to the Corinthians by himself.* Mr. Locke's paraphrase is in these words: 'Or, if you have received from him (the intruder) other, or greater gifts of the Spirit, than those you have received from me.' See 1 Cor. xii.

10.) Gal. iii. 2. "This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" This is paraphrased by Mr. Locke after this manner. 'This 'one thing I desire to know of you. Did you receive the miraculous gifts of the Spirit by the 'works of the law, or by the gospel preached to you?'

11.) Ver. 5. "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" Here again Mr. Locke's paraphrase is this; 'The gifts of the Holy Ghost that have been conferred upon you, have they not been 'conferred upon you as Christians, professing faith in Jesus Christ, and not as observers of the 'law? And hath not he, who has conveyed these gifts to you, and done miracles among you, 'done it as a preacher and professor of the gospel?'

By all which texts we see, how common spiritual gifts were in the churches of Christ. St. Paul, in Eph. i. 13. cited just now, useth the expression, "that holy Spirit of promise." Our Lord's own words are: "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you," Luke xxiv. 49. Again, "He commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father: which, said he, ye have heard of me," Acts i. 4. And see ch. ii. 33.

Indeed the promise of the spirit was made to all believers in general; and not to apostles only: though to them especially, and in a greater measure, than to others. The promise of the spirit is delivered by Jesus himself, by his forerunner, and by the ancient prophets, as the great blessing of the evangelical dispensation, or the privilege of the times of the Messiah.

Says our Lord's forerunner, "I baptize you with water——He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire," Matt. iii. 11. Comp. Acts i. 5. ch. xi. 16. Our Lord says, John vii. 38, 39. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"—— And, adds the evangelist: "This he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." And Mark xvi. 17, 18. "These signs shall follow them that believe." In my name shall they cast out dæmons. They shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents. And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." For the promises of the Old Testament, I need now refer only to Acts ii. 16—18. And St. Peter, directing and comforting those who were much affected with his first discourse after Christ's ascension, "said unto them: Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. And he shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," ch. ii. 38, 39. Again: "And we are his witnesses of these things. And so also is the Holy Ghost, which God has given to them that obey him," ver. 32.

20. I shall here put together some of those texts, which contain exhortations to such as were partakers of the Holy Ghost, or had been favoured with spiritual gifts.

1.) Eph. iv. 30. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Or, "with which ye were sealed in the day of redemption." This text was quoted before, upon another account.

Here may be a reference to Is. lxiii. 10. "By the spirit of God" the apostle means those powers and gifts with which those Christians had been sealed; and by which they might be known, both to themselves and others, to be the people of God. See Eph. i. 13, 14. In the preceding and following verses the apostle cautions the Ephesians to avoid every thing, by which God might be offended, and provoked to withhold his gracious influences, or to withdraw from them the gifts that had been bestowed upon them. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth—— Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."

* Η πνευμα ἑτερον λαμβανετε, ὁ ουκ ελαβετε. Aut si is vobis potiora dona Spiritus conferre potuit, quam nos per manuum impositionem vobis contulimus. Grot. in loc.

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2.) Eph. v. 18, 19. "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing, and making melody in your heart to the Lord." 'That is, be careful not to be drunk with wine, in which 'men are too liable to exceed. But, when you are disposed to be cheerful, gratify and entertain 'yourselves and others, with a free exercise of the spiritual gifts wherewith God has blessed you.' Comp. Col. iv. 16.

3.) 1 Thess. v. 19—22. "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."

'Quench not, nor damp the spiritual gifts, with which you have been favoured, either by a 'neglect of any of them, or by an irregular exercise of them, or by the indulgence of any sin. 'And especially, do not despise, but cherish, and highly esteem the gift of prophesying, or 'speaking by inspiration for the instruction and edification of the church. And be sure that you 'take heed to, and examine what is proposed to you in your public assemblies. Embrace what-'ever is right and good, and reject every thing that is evil.'

The comment of Grotius upon those words, "Quench not the spirit," is to this purpose.[a] By "the Spirit" are meant the gifts of healing, and of tongues, which are fitly compared to fire. And therefore may be said to be "stirred up," as in 2 Tim. i. 6. and on the other hand to be extinguished. They are stirred up by prayer, giving of thanks, and a continued regular practice of piety. And are extinguished by the contrary. For God, under the evangelical dispensation, does not vouchsafe, or at least continue those gifts to any but such as believe, and live piously. See Mark xvi. 17.

And Wolfius says, that[b] by "the Spirit," undoubtedly, are meant gifts of the Spirit, who is sometimes compared to fire, as 2 Tim. i. 6.

The apostle having delivered that direction, "Quench not the Spirit," relating to spiritual gifts in general, adds a particular caution, "Despise not prophesyings," because, though it was the most useful, and valuable gift of all, some, as it seems, were apt to prefer "speaking with tongues," as a more showy gift. This may be collected from what he writes, 2 Cor. xiv. And see particularly ver. 39.

"Abstain from all appearance of evil." Many understand this to be a direction, relating to practice in life, agreeably to our version; that Christians should not only abstain from what is really, and manifestly evil, but also from every thing that has but the appearance of being evil. And so Grotius understood this clause.[c] But to me it seems, that this last clause is to be understood in connection with the former part, "prove all things:" and that it is intended to direct the right exercise of the judgment. Christians should examine all things proposed to them, embracing what is right, and rejecting every thing that is wrong. So this exhortation was understood by Pelagius.[d] And Grotius himself interprets the former expressions, "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good," in the like manner.[e]

4.) 1 Tim. iv. 14. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."

5.) 2 Tim. i. 6. "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands."

I take no notice of any other texts of this kind. But it is well known, that the twelfth and fourteenth chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians contain many directions for regulating the exercise of spiritual gifts, with which that church abounded. It is sufficient for me to refer to them. There are likewise in other epistles of the New Testament divers exhortations to

[a] Το πνευμα μη σβεννυτε.] Spiritus hic sunt dona sanationum et linguarum, quæ sicut in ignis formâ data erant, ita igni recte comparantur, ac proinde dicuntur, et 'suscitari.' 2 Tim. i. 6. et contra 'exstingui. Suscitantur' precibus, gratiarum actione, ac perpetuo studio pietatis: 'extinguuntur' per contraria. Nam in Novo Testamento, maxime post constitutas ecclesias, Deus illa dona non vult dare aut servare, nisi credentibus, et pie viventibus. Vide Marc. xvi. 17 Grot. in loc.

[b] Quod ad rem spectat, το πνευμα omnia sunt dona spiritûs S. qui cum igne solet comparari, quo sensu Paulus 2 Tim. i. 6. αναζωπυρειν τα χαρισμα θεου jubet. Wolf. Curæ in 1 Th. v. 19.

[c] Απο παντος ειδους πονηρου απεχεσθε.] Christiani non a rebus malis tantum, sed ab iis, quæ speciem habent mali, abstinere debent. Exemplum vide 1 Cor. viii. 10. Grot. in 1 Thess. v. 21.

[d] Tantum, ut probetis, si legi non sunt contraria, quæ dicuntur: si quid tale fuerit, refutate. Pelag. in 1 Thess. v. 21, 22. Ap. Hieron. Opp. T. V. p. 1082.

[e] Παντα δοκιμαζοντες, το καλον κατεχετε. Hoc pertinet ad διακρισεις πνευματων. 1 Cor. xii. xiv. Sic 1 Joh. iv. 1. Δοκιμαζετε τα πνευματα——Ergo παντα, omnia, hic restringendum ex antecedente ad ea quæ dicuntur ab eis, qui se prophetas dictitant. Grot. ad ver. 20.

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Christians in regard to the gifts, with which they were favoured: as Rom. xii. 3—8. 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11.

21. 1 Thess. i. 5. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance"—— ver. 6. "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost."

The explication of this text shall be taken from Dr. Benson's paraphrase on the epistle. 'In 'as much as the gospel, preached by us, did not come unto you in word only; but was accom- 'panied also with a miraculous power, and with our imparting unto you the Holy Spirit, and with 'full and abundant conviction to your minds.'

——'And we can bear witness to your amiable behaviour. For you became imitators of us, 'and of the Lord Jesus Christ: in that you steadily adhered to the truth, amidst great difficul- 'ties and discouragements, after you had received the gospel, in much affliction, with the joy, 'which ariseth from your having the Holy Spirit.' The same learned writer, in his note upon the fifth verse, says: 'By power I understand the power of working of miracles, exerted by the 'apostle, or his assistants. And by the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, I understand the gift of the 'Spirit, as imparted to the Thessalonians.'

22. Heb. ix. 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"

Dr. Whitby, in his Annotations upon Heb. v. 5. says, that Christ was by his death consecrated to his priesthood, and dates the commencement of our Lord's priesthood at his resurrection. This sentiment has been much improved by the late Mr. Thomas Moore in his discourse concerning the priesthood of Christ. I may refer to one place particularly, where he says, 'The time, when Jesus was called to, and invested with the order of priesthood, was at 'his resurrection from the dead.' Which he argues from Heb. v. 10. compared with Acts xiii. 33. See him p. 11, 12, 13.

That may be the key to this text. However, there are some other interpreters, who have well explained it, as we shall see presently, though they have not so distinctly settled the date of Christ's priesthood.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience——?"

When our Lord offered himself to God, or presented himself before God, he was risen from the dead, and had obtained everlasting life, "to die no more," as St. Paul says, Rom. vi. 9, 10. And in Ps. cx. 4. the only place in the Old Testament, where Christ's priesthood is spoken of, it is said: "The Lord has sworn, and will not repent: thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." This the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews often observes, and insists much upon. As Heb. vii. 21. where the text of the Psalm is quoted, see also ver. 11. And at ver. 24, 25. "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him: seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And ver. 15, 16, of the same chapter: "For that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." And ch. v. 9. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him." And ver. 12, of this ch. ix. just before the text, which we are now considering, he speaks of Christ's "having obtained eternal redemption for us." And ver. 15.——"that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." And in 1 Cor. xv. 45, "the last Adam," meaning the Lord Jesus, is said to be "a quickening Spirit."

The meaning of this text therefore seems to be this: 'That Christ being now "entered 'into heaven itself," ch. ix. 24. that is, the true holy of holies, by his own never-dying spirit, 'or by "the power of an endless life," ch. vii. 16. he "offered himself to God," or presented 'himself before God, having been innocent, and unspotted in his whole life on earth, and being 'now "made perfect, and higher than the heavens." Ch. v. 9. and vii. 26, 28.

Which is very agreeable to the annotations of Grotius upon this verse.[a]

[a] Oblatio autem Christi hic intelligitur illa, quæ oblationi legali in adyto factæ respondet. Ea autem est non oblatio in altari crucis facta, sed facta in adyto cœlesti. Facta autem ibi est, 'per Spiritum æternum,' aut, ut ante dixit vii. 16.

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There are some others likewise, who have so pertinently criticised upon this text, that I am willing to transcribe their remarks below, for the sake of intelligent readers.[a]

23. Heb. x. 28, 29. "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the spirit of grace?"

The case here supposed is that of apostasy from the Christian faith. The persons intended are such as those spoken of ch. vi. 4. "Who had tasted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost." And one of the aggravations of their apostasy is, that "they had done despite to the spirit of grace:" or rejected, and cast reproach upon that great evidence of the truth of the Christian religion, the miraculous gifts, which God had most graciously bestowed upon themselves and others. So [b] Grotius. And Limborch expresseth himself to the like purpose.[c]

24. 1 John v. 5—10. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth, that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. And these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he has testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself. He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record, that God gave of his Son."

I have quoted this passage according to the Alexandrian, and other ancient manuscripts, and the citations in ancient writers, without regarding any modern printed copies: which, indeed, deserve not any regard.

Some have paraphrased the former part of ver. 6. in this manner. 'Now that this Jesus 'Christ was a real man, and died, we have the utmost testimony. For I myself, when he ex-'pired on the cross, saw his side pierced with a spear, and blood and water gush out at the 'wound: which are two determining proofs that he really died.' Supposing, that here is a reference to what is related in St. John's gospel, xix. 34, 35.

But that is manifestly a weak and arbitrary interpretation.[d] St. John is not here observing the proofs of our Lord's real humanity, but of his being the Son of God, the Messiah.

To me it seems, that the water, an emblem of purity, [Ezek. xxxvi. 25.] denotes the innocence of our Lord's life, which was without spot, and exemplary: and the reasonableness, ex-

'per vim vitæ indissolubilis,' quia spiritus ejus jam non erat vivens tantum, ut in vitâ hac terrenâ, sed in æternum corpus sibi adjunctum 'vivificans.' 1 Cor. xv. 45——Δια hic sume, ut supra ver. 12. pro præpositione *cum*, quomodo et Hebræum ב poni solet. Intelligitur hinc dignitas oblationis, quod eam fecit is, qui jam spiritu et corpore erat immortalis. Sanguini autem purgatio ista tribuitur, quia per sanguinem, id est, mortem Christi, secutâ ejus excitatione et evectione, gignitur in nobis fides. Rom. iii. 25.——Cum dicit αμωμον, respicit legem victimarum Lev. xxii. 20.——In victimis legalibus nullum debebat esse corporis vitium: in Christi vitâ nihil fuit vitiosum. Et ideo spiritu illo æterno statim donatus est. Grot. Annot. in Heb. ix. 14.

[a] Ὁς δια πνευματος αιωνιου.] Qui a mortuis suscitatus, cum spirituali et immortali corpore (quod antequam in cœleste tabernaculum ingrederetur, accepit) omnis infirmitatis et patibilitatis labe, quæ mortali naturæ inhærent, purgatum semetipsum obtulit Deo, sedens ad dexteram majestatis ejus in cœlis. Breniüs in loc.

Christum autem, cujus sanguinem opponit sanguini taurorum et hircorum, describit, quod 'per spiritum æternum seipsum Deo immaculatum obtulerit.' Christo jam e mortuis suscitato tribuit 'spiritum æternum:' quia post resuscitationem anima ejus non amplius est anima vivens, sed spiritus vivificans. 1 Cor. xv. 45. diciturque habere vitam indissolubilem, supra, vii. 16. et in æternum manere. ver. 24. Vivit ergo in omnem æternitatem, ut sit æternus Pontifex. Christus nimirum sanguinem suum, tamquam victima, in cruce effudit, et cum isto sanguine, id est, virtute illius sanguinis, jam e mortuis suscitatus, et spiritus vivificus ac æternus, seipsum in cœlis obtulit Deo, id est, coram Deo pro nobis comparuit.

Dicitur autem hic 'se obtulisse immaculatum,' non tantum respectu vitæ suæ, quam hic in terris degit, quâtenus sine ullâ peccati labe vixit. 1 Pet. ii. 22. 2 Cor. v. 21. sed et respectu statûs illius cœlestis, quo nunc fruitur, ab omni infirmitate, cui hic in terris in statu humiliationis obnoxius fuit, adeo ut nihil in ipso, ut æternus sit Pontifex, desiderari possit. Vid. cap. vii. 26. Ph. Limborch in Ep. ad Heb. cap. ix. 14.

[b] Και το πνευμα της χαριτος ενυβρισας: 'et spiritui gratiæ contumeliam fecerit.'] Spiritum illum, quem summo Dei beneficio acceperat, contumeliâ afficiens: nullius pretii æstimans tantum donum, quo se ipse ait privatum. Grot. in loc.

[c] Tertium. 'Et spiritum gratiæ contumeliâ affecit. Spiritus gratiæ' est spiritus ille, qui in initio prædicationis evangelii datus fuit credentibus, ad confirmationem divinitatis evangelii: nimirum dona illa extraordinaria spiritus sancti, quæ passim in Actis et epistolis Apostolorum in credentes effusa legimus. Qui vocatur spiritus gratiæ, tum quia ex gratiâ divinâ credentibus datus est; tum quia per illum obsignata fuit divinitas doctrinæ Jesu Christi, in quâ maxima et excellentissima Dei gratia patefacta est. Limb. in Ep. ad Heb. p. 667.

[d] And yet it is followed by the late Mr. Wetstein: Probavit se non phantasma, sed verum hominem esse, qui ex spiritu, sanguine, et aquâ seu humore constaret. Joh. xix. 34, 35. J. J. Wetstein in loc. p. 721.

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cellency, and perfection of his doctrine, which, after the strictest examination, and nicest scrutiny, cannot be charged with any error or falsehood. The blood denotes our Lord's willing and patient, though painful and ignominious death, the utmost testimony, that can be given of integrity. The Spirit intends our Lord's many miraculous works, wrought by the Spirit, the finger, the power of God, or God himself. This testimony is truth, that is, exceeding true, so that it may be relied upon. For it is unquestionable, and cannot be gainsayed. See John v. 32—37. ch. x. 25. Acts ii. 22.

Here are three witnesses.[a] And "they agree in one." They are harmonious, all saying the same thing, and concurring in the same testimony.

The apostle adds, ver. 9. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater:' referring to the appointment in the law of Moses, that "by the mouth of two or three witnesses any matter might be established." Deut. xvii. 6. and xix. 15. Whatsoever was attested by two or three men, was deemed true and certain. In the point before us there are three most credible witnesses, one of whom is God himself. Refusing this testimony therefore would be the same, as making God a liar, or charging him with giving false evidence, and with a design to deceive, and impose upon his creatures. "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the testimony which God giveth of his Son."

This interpretation is the same as that in Grotius,[b] or not very different.

25. Rev. xxii. 17. "And the Spirit and the bride say: Come." 'That is, says[c] Grotius, 'men who are endowed with spiritual gifts.'

Mr. Pyle's paraphrase is this: 'The whole body of truly good Christians, who are the true 'church and spouse of Christ.' And in his notes he says, '"The Spirit and the bride,"' or 'the spiritual bride, that is, the true church of Christ. Thus "grace and truth" is a truth con-'veying the greatest favour. John i. 17. "Glory and virtue" is glorious virtue or power. 1 Pet. 3. '"kingdom and glory," a glorious kingdom. 1 Thess. ii. 12. Had the generality of commenta-'tors observed this, they would not have had occasion to interpret this of the "Holy Spirit of 'God, wishing, [and] praying for the coming of Christ's kingdom, in the same manner, and 'with the same ardency as St. John, and the Christian church here does. Which to me seems 'very incongruous.' So Mr. Pyle, whose interpretation is approved by Mr. Lowman.

Brenius[d] is not very different. Or, as some[e] other interpreters express it: '"The Spirit 'and the bride:" that is, the church animated by the Spirit, and ardently longing for the coming 'of Christ.'

Every one may perceive, that we have been discoursing of miraculous gifts and powers: which now are, and for a long time have been commonly called extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. These are not saving. They who received such gifts after baptism, and profession of faith in Jesus Christ, were thereby satisfied, that the doctrine of Christ was true, and from heaven. And they were assured, that if they acted according to that faith, they might be saved, without observing the peculiarities of the law of Moses. But such gifts alone were not saving, without sincere virtue, and the practice of a good life.

So says St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. "But covet earnestly the best gifts. Τα χαρισματα τα κρειττονα. And yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge: and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." The same might be said of the necessity of sobriety, and humility, and meekness, or any other virtue, that is there said of charity or love. And perhaps all social virtue is comprehended by the apostle in the one virtue here mentioned by him. For in another place he says: "Love is the fulfilling of the law," Rom. xiii. 8—10.

[a] Ὅτι τρεις εισιν οἱ μαρτυρουντες κ. λ. I shall here put down a similar expression of the Sophist Ælius Aristides, in the second century. Oration T. I. p. 146. edit. Jebb. al. p. 272. Τρεις γαρ εισιν οἱ μαρτυρησαντες παραχρημα Αθηναιων ειναι την νικην, Αθηναιοι, Λακεδαιμονιοι, Βοιωτοι.

[b] Et in epistolâ 1 Joh. v. 8. 'Aqua' est puritas vitæ Christianæ, quæ simul cum martyrio, et miraculis, testimonium reddit veritati dogmatis. Grot. Ann. in Joh. iii. 5.

[c] Id est, viri propheticis donis clari. Vide supra ver. 6. Est abstractum pro concreto; spiritus pro habentibus spiritum. Dicunt: Veni. &c. Grot. in loc.

[d] Spiritus qui est in Sponsâ, vel Sponsa per spiritum, qui in ipsâ residet, dicit: id est, credentium omnium vota, tum separatim tum conjunctim, hoc idem contendunt. Bren. in loc.

[e] C'est à dire, l'Espouse, qui est l'Eglise, animée du S. Esprit, et soupirant ardemment après l'apparition de J. C. Lenf. et Beaus.

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And that all virtues ought to be joined together, and carefully cultivated by those who make a profession of the Christian religion, is shown by St. Peter. "And beside this," says he, "giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, [or fortitude,] and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness—For so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. i. 5—10.

Conclusion. I have now finished what I proposed at the beginning of this postscript, having explained, according to my ability, those words, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God, as used in the scriptures.

Many of the interpretations, which have been given by me, will be readily assented to by all. If any others should not be approved of at first, I hope no offence needs to be taken. I do not dictate: but with humility and deference recommend these thoughts to the consideration of my brethren in Christ Jesus.

It becomes us all to examine the doctrines, which are proposed to us. We should not be Christians and Protestants upon the same grounds, that others are Mahometans and Papists: barely because such or such opinions are generally received, and established in the country where we live.

Our blessed Lord and his apostles have forewarned us, that men would arise, teaching perverse things; that tares would be mingled with the good grain, and error with truth. The event has been accordingly. If there are any notions concerning a Trinity of Divine Persons, which are not right and just: if transubstantiation is not a reasonable and scriptural doctrine: if the worship of angels, and departed saints, and of their images, is not required and commanded, but condemned and forbidden in the Old and New Testament: it must be allowed, that corruptions have been brought into the Christian Church. For such things there are among those, who are called Christians.

What is to be done in this case? Are they, who discern such corruptions, obliged to acquiesce? Would it be sin, to show, how unreasonable and unscriptural such things are? I do not see how this can be said, provided it be done with meekness and gentleness.

Plato, in his Timæus, says, 'That [a] it is very difficult to find out the author and parent of 'the universe, and when found, it is impossible to declare him to all.' Cicero, who translated that work of Plato into Latin, renders the last clause, as if Plato had said: 'When [b] you have 'found him, it is unlawful to declare him to the vulgar.' Perhaps, that was Cicero's own sentiment. Being a statesman, and politician, as well as a philosopher, he might be more concerned for peace than truth. A multitude of deities being the prevailing belief, he was afraid to oppose the prejudices of the people, who might be offended at the doctrine of the divine unity with its consequences. But so it should not be amongst Christians, who, beside the light of nature, have also the light of revelation.

Says the Psalmist: "In Judah is God known. His name is great in Israel," Ps. lxxvi. 1. It was their great privilege, and happiness, that God was known among them, and worshipped, and served by them: when heathen people were ignorant of the true God, and worshipped senseless idols. That distinction was owing to the revelation, which God had made of himself to Abraham, and his descendants. Which benefit we also now enjoy, together with the clearer and fuller revelation of God and his will, which has been made by our blessed Saviour, the promised Messiah. See John i. 18. iv. 23, 24. xvii. 25, 26.

Says that most excellent teacher of men in an address to the Father: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent," John xvii. 3.

The right knowledge of God and Christ therefore must be the greatest of blessings, and should be sought after in the first place, and be prized above all things. And wherever the benefit of it is obstructed by wrong notions, it may be the duty of some to give, and of others to receive instruction: that God may be glorified, and men may be edified, and saved.

The scriptures are acknowledged to be the fountain of religious knowledge. Accordingly some there have been among us, and in our own times, who have endeavoured to give a clear

[a] Τον μεν ουν ποιητην και πατερα τουδε του παντος ευρειν τε εργον, και ευροντα, εις παντας αδυνατον λεγειν. Platon. Timæus. p. 28. T. III. Serran. et ap. Fabr. p. 336. [b] —— et cum jam inveneris, indicare in vulgus nefas.

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account of the scripture-doctrine concerning God and Christ: men of unquestioned piety, and eminent for natural and acquired abilities. And though their schemes have not been exactly the same, and they have not all had equal success and acceptance, it must be acknowledged, that their writings have been very useful. They have kept up, and cherished a spirit of inquiry and thoughtfulness in things of religion. And they have promoted knowledge, moderation, candour and equity among Christians. And may such excellent dispositions prevail among us yet more and more.

Saith the venerable Dr. Sherlock, Bishop of London, in the fourth volume [a] of his Discourses, lately published, p. 321, 322. 'From these things laid together it is evident, that the apostles 'were witnesses and teachers of the faith, and had no authority to add any thing to the doc-'trine of Christ, or to declare new articles of faith.

'Now if the apostles, commissioned directly by Christ himself, and supported by miraculous 'gifts of the spirit, had not this power, can any of their successors in the government of the 'church, without great impiety, pretend to it? Did the bishops and clergy of the ninth and tenth 'centuries know the articles of the faith better than the apostles did? Or were they more power-'fully assisted by the Holy Spirit? No Christian can think it, or say it. Whence is it then that 'the church of Rome has received the power they pretend to, of making new articles of faith, 'and dooming all to eternal destruction who receive them not? Can any sober, serious Christian 'trust himself to such guides, and not tremble, when he reads the woe denounced by St. Paul: '"Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel—let him be accursed?" 'Gal. i. 8.'

Certainly, that is a noble declaration, and well deserving the regard of all Christians.

His lordship here allows, or even asserts the rights of private judgment. He supposes, that common Christians, who have no share in the government of the church, are able to understand the doctrine delivered by the apostles, and the determinations of bishops, and to compare them together, and to discern wherein they differ. And he allows us to reject new articles, not delivered and taught by Christ's apostles. And strongly represents to us the great hazard of trusting to such assuming guides, as make and impose new articles of faith.

If we may judge of articles, taught by the bishops and clergy of the ninth and tenth centuries; we may for the same reason judge concerning those decreed by the bishops and clergy of the fourth and fifth centuries—For neither were they apostles, but at the utmost no more than successors of the apostles. And if it should appear, that they taught and recommended any articles, which are no part of "the faith, once delivered to the saints" by Christ's apostles, such articles may be rejected by us.

And since it is allowed, that the bishops and clergy of the ninth and tenth centuries have assumed an authority to decide new articles, to which they had no right: should not this put Christians upon their guard, and induce them to examine the doctrine proposed to them, and consider, whether it is the faith once delivered to the saints, or somewhat added to it? For what has been done, or attempted, in some ages, may have been attempted in others.

His lordship blames the church of Rome for making new articles of faith, and dooming all to eternal destruction, who receive them not.

We should be impartial. If any others do the like, are not they blameable also? It is well known, that there is a creed, in great authority with many, beside the church of Rome, containing an abstruse doctrine, very hard to be believed. And it would be a very difficult undertaking to show, that it adds not any thing to the doctrine of Christ, as taught and testified by his faithful apostles. And yet it is there said: 'This is the catholic faith, which except a man 'believe faithfully he cannot be saved.' And 'which faith, except every man do keep whole 'and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.' Can this be justified? And does not the bishop's argument just recited, oblige me to add, though unwillingly: may it not deserve to be considered by every sober and serious Christian, who solemnly recites that creed: on whom those anathemas may fall, if God should treat men according to strict justice!

But I forbear enlarging. For I have been desirous, if possible, not to say any thing offensive. Therefore I do not indulge myself in grievous complaints, and severe reprehensions of such things, as by many have been thought to be wrong.

[a] It is the twelfth discourse in that volume. The text is the epistle of St. Jude, ver. 3. latter part.

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But, if I might be permitted to do it, I would take notice of one thing, because it has a connection with the subject of this postscript.

'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, 'is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.'

Doubtless this is said by many very frequently, and with great devotion. But can it be said truly? Does not that deserve consideration? Is there any such doxology in the New Testament? If not, how can it be said, to have been 'in the beginning?' Are not the books of the New Testament the most ancient, and the most authentic Christian writings in all the world? It matters not much to inquire when this doxology was first used, or how long it has been in use, if it be not in the New Testament. And whether it is there, or not, may be known by those, who are pleased to read it with care: as all may, in Protestant countries, where the Bible lies open to be seen and read by all men.

I would therefore, after many others, recommend the diligent study of the scriptures, and the making use of all proper means for gaining the true sense of them. If we had the knowledge of the Christian religion, as contained in the scriptures, the advantages would be great and manifold. Jesus would be unspeakably amiable: and the gospel would appear to be a pearl of great price: Christians would be no longer wavering and unsettled, but would be firmly established in a faith, that is throughout reasonable and excellent, and well attested to be of divine original. As our Lord says to the woman of Samaria. John iv. 14. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." He will be fully satisfied. He will desire no other instruction concerning the right way of worshipping and serving God, or obtaining true happiness. "But the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

If we would sincerely study, heartily embrace, and openly profess the Christian doctrine in its purity, and would diligently recommend it to others, upon the ground of that evidence, with which God hath clothed it, we should gain upon deists and infidels of all sorts. For a religion, reasonable and excellent in all its principles, promulged by a teacher of an unspotted character, with a commission from heaven, confirmed by many mighty works, which could be performed by God only, has an evidence, which cannot be easily withstood and gainsayed. But no authority can recommend falsehood and absurdity to rational beings, who think and consider. Every one therefore, who loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity, must be willing to reform abuses and corruptions, which have been introduced into the Christian profession, and are matter of offence to heathens and infidels.

When the religion professed by Christians shall be in all things agreeable to the scriptures, the only standard of religious truth; the advantages just mentioned, are very likely: as also divers others, which may be readily apprehended by every one. For then the papal power and tyranny, which for many ages has been a heavy weight upon Christendom, will sink, and fall to the ground: impositions upon conscience, which undermine religion at the very foundation, and prevail at present to a great degree in almost all Christian countries, will be abolished. The consequence of which will be, that true piety and virtue will be more general in all ranks and orders of men. The great diversity of opinions, and fierce contentions among Christians, which are now so great an offence and scandal to by-standers, will cease: Christians will live in harmony, and will love one another as brethren. And the Church of Christ will be the joy and the praise of the whole earth.

As an unbiassed and disinterested love, and pursuit of truth are of great importance, and would mightily conduce to the good ends and purposes which are so desirable; I cannot but wish, that we did all of us less mind our own things, the things of our own worldly wealth and credit, our own church and party, and more the things of Jesus Christ. To whom be glory and dominion now and ever. Amen.

END OF THE FIRST POSTSCRIPT.

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THE SECOND POSTSCRIPT.

CONTAINING REMARKS UPON THE THIRD PART OF THE LATE BISHOP OF CLOGHER'S VINDICATION OF THE HISTORIES OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.[a]

LETT. iv. p. 59, or 425.[b] 'But, my lord, supposing we should allow, that there were more 'Gods than one concerned in the creation of the world, as manifestly appears that there were 'from Gen. i. 26, and ch. iii. 22. where it is said: "Let us make man in our image." And, '"behold the man is become as one of us."'

Is then creative power a property communicable to many or several? St. Paul speaks of one Creator only, Rom. i. 25. and blames the heathens, "who worshipped, and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." What then would be the consequences, if Christians should come to believe, that there are more creators than one?

It is hard, that we should be put to prove, what is so very evident, as that there is one God creator. However, I shall here prove it from the Old, and New Testament.

Ex. xx. 1. "And God spake all these words, saying—— Ver. 3. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." Ver. 10, 11. "But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God—For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is."

Ps. cxxxvi. "O, give thanks to the Lord, to him, who alone doth great wonders, to him that by wisdom made the heavens, to him that stretched out the earth above the waters: to him that made great lights, the sun to rule by day, the moon and stars to rule by night," &c.

Is. xlii. 5. "Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens and stretched them out: he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it: he that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein."

Is. xl. 28. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, nor is weary?"

Ch. xliv. 24. "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb: I am the Lord, that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." See also ch. xlv. 11, 12. ch. li. 12, 13. Jer. x. 12. ch. li. 15. and elsewhere.

Let us now consider the words of Gen. i. 26. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

Some Christians have said that here is a proof of a trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead. The learned writer, now before us, argues hence for several creators, one supreme, another, or several subordinate. But it is easy to answer, that the Jewish people never understood these expressions after that manner; for they always believed one God and Creator, and that God to be one person. And many learned interpreters among Christians have said, that [c] the style, common with princes, and other great men, who often speak in the plural num-

[a] When I was preparing these remarks in March last 1758, we received the tidings of the death of the Right Reverend Dr. Robert Clayton, Lord Bishop of Clogher, who departed this life the preceding month; which gave me much concern upon divers accounts. In particular, I was in hopes, that these remarks, such as they are, might be perused by his lordship. I could wish likewise, that Mr. Whiston were still living. But they are both removed out of this world, as I likewise shall be in a short time. And certainly, it behoves us all to improve diligently the season of life whilst it lasts, and to serve God and man according to the ability which God has given us, and the station in which we have been placed, that we may give up an account of our stewardship with joy, and not with grief. Though those eminent and useful men are now no more in this world, their writings remain. It is with these that I am concerned. If I have inadvertently misrepresented them, I presume, they have friends who are able to vindicate them. And, if my argument does not appear conclusive, I wish that they, or some others may show wherein it fails. Jan. 26, 1759.

[b] The author, in composing these remarks upon the third part of the bishop's Vindication, made use of that edition, which was printed at London in 1758. But another edition of the whole Vindication, with all the three parts, having been published here on the twenty-third day of this instant January, 1759, just as these sheets were going to the press, he has taken care to add the pages of this new edition to those of the former.

[c] 'Faciamus.'] Mos est Hebræis de Deo, ut de Rege, loqui. Reges res magnas agunt de consilio primorum. 1 Reg. xii. 6. 2 Paral. x. 9. Sic et Deus 1 Reg. xxii. 20. Grot. ad Gen. i. 26.

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ber, is here ascribed to God. Nor needs the consultation, here represented, be supposed to be between equals. But God may be rather understood to declare his mind to the angels, as his counsellors.

But indeed we need not suppose any discourse, or consultation at all. The meaning is no more than this. 'All other things being made, God proceeded to the creation of man: or, he 'now proposed, at the conclusion, to make man.' And it may be reckoned probable, that Moses introduces God, in this peculiar manner, deliberating and consulting upon the creation of man, to intimate thereby, that he is the chief of the works of God. Or, in other words, according to Patrick, 'God not only reserved man for the last of his works, but does, as it were, advise, 'and consult, and deliberate about his production: the better to represent the dignity of man, 'and that he was made with admirable wisdom and prudence.'

We may be confirmed in the reasonableness of this way of thinking by observing the style made use of in speaking of all the other parts of the creation, which is to this effect. "God said, Let there be light, and there was light. God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters—— And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind."

There is another like instance ch. ii. 18. "And the Lord God, [Jehovah, Elohim,] said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him an help meet for him." The design of the other expressions, as before observed, was to intimate the great dignity and superior excellence of man above the other creatures, whose formation has been already related. In like manner, when God proceeds to the making of the woman, he is represented as consulting, and resolving what to do: that the man might be the more sensible of the goodness of the Creator in providing for him so suitable a help.

Moreover, though in Gen. i. 26. the words are: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:" the execution of that purpose, as related in ver. 27. is in these words: "So God created man in HIS own image: in the image of God created HE him: male and female created HE them." And when the formation of man is mentioned in other places of scripture, no intimation is given that more than one had a hand in his creation. See particularly Matt. xix. 3—6. Mark x. 2—9. where our blessed Lord himself says: "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." And "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder." For certain therefore man, as well as the other creatures, was made by God himself.

If more than one being had been concerned in the creation of man, or any other parts of the world, we ought to have been acquainted with it, that due respect might be paid to them by us. As scripture is here silent, no man has a right to ascribe that to another which the scripture ascribes to God alone. And wherein, as in Ps. cxlviii. all beings, of every rank, in heaven and on earth, are required to praise God for the wonders of their formation. "Praise ye the Lord: praise him from the heavens: praise him all ye his angels: praise ye him all his hosts: praise ye him sun and moon: praise him all ye stars of light——Let them praise the name of the Lord. For he commanded, and they were created——Kings of the earth, and all people: princes, and all judges of the earth——Let them praise the name of the Lord; for his name alone is excellent; and his glory is above the earth and heaven."

Ecc. xii. 1. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." In the Hebrew the word is plural, Creators. Nevertheless, not only our own, but all other versions translate, and rightly, Creator.

Και μνησθητι τε κτισαντος σε εν ημεραις νεοτητος σε. Gr.

Memento Creatoris tui in diebus juventutis tuæ. Lat.

Is. liv. 5. "For thy maker is thy husband." In the Hebrew, literally, "for thy makers are thy husbands." Nevertheless the words are always understood as singular. And what follows, shows that one person is only intended: "the Lord of hosts is his name."

Calvin's remark upon Gen. iii. 22. is to this purpose: 'Whereas,' says he, 'many Christians 'from this place draw the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Deity; I fear their argument 'is not solid.' Quod autem eliciunt ex hoc loco christiani doctrinam de tribus in Deo personis, vereor ne satis firmum sit argumentum.

But Patrick says: 'Those words plainly insinuate a plurality of persons. And all other 'interpretations seem forced and unnatural.' And he particularly rejects what Calvin says.

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For my part, so far as I am able to judge, if those words implied more Divine Persons than one, or more Creators than one; it would not be worth while to dispute, whether they are equal, or not.

But, as before intimated, I rather think, that here, and in some other like texts, there is a reference to the angelic order of beings, supposed to be more perfect, and more knowing than man. For though Moses gives no particular account of the creation of angels, their existence is supposed in divers parts of his history. And they may be considered as counsellors only, or witnesses and attendants.

And I cannot help being of opinion, that those Christians, who endeavour to prove, from the Old Testament, a Trinity of Divine Persons, or more Creators than one, whether co-equal or subordinate, expose themselves to the unbelieving part of the Jewish people, whom they are desirous to gain. For the Divine unity is with them a fundamental article of religion. Remarkable are the words of Lord King, in his Critical History of the Apostles' Creed, upon the first article of it, p. 55, 56. 'As for the persons, who were condemned by this clause, it will be readily granted, that they were not the Jews, seeing the unity of the Godhead is every where inculcated in the Mosaical law, and the body of that people have been so immoveably fixed and confirmed in the belief thereof, that now, throughout their sixteen hundred years captivity and dispersion, they have never quitted or deserted that principle, that God is one: as is evident from their thirteen articles of faith, composed by Maimonides, the second whereof is the Unity of the Blessed God. Which is there explained to be in such a peculiar and transcendent manner, as that nothing like it can be found. And in their liturgy, according to the use of the Sepharadim, or the Spaniards, which is read in those parts of the world, in their synagogues, in the very first hymn, which is an admiring declaration of the excellences of the Divine Nature, the repeated chorus is this: 'All creatures, both above and below, testify and witness, all of them as one, that the Lord is one, and his name one.'

And if we would but read the New Testament with care, and then consider what we have read and seen therein; we might know, that one object of worship is there recommended by Christ and his apostles, and that he is the everlasting God, the Creator of the world, and all things therein, and the same who was worshipped by the Jewish people, and their ancestors.

Our Lord himself says, that he came in his Father's name, and acted by his authority, even his, who, the Jews said, was their God. And he styles him 'Lord of heaven and earth, and the only true God.' And he referred them to their scriptures, as testifying of him.

The apostles of Christ after his ascension, preaching to Jews, say: "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers has glorified his son Jesus," Acts iii. 13. "the God of our fathers raised up Jesus, chap. v. 3. And requesting special assistance from heaven in their work, and under their many difficulties, "they lift up their voice to God, and said: Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is. Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said"—chap. iv. 24, 25.

Paul, writing to the Jewish believers, says: "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son," Heb. i. 1, 2. He and Barnabas, teaching Gentiles, say: "We preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." Acts xiv. 15. And at Athens, says Paul: "God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands." chap. xvii. 29.

I think I have now proved, both from the Old and the New Testament, that there is one God, creator of man and all things in the world.[a]

Accordingly, the first article in the apostle's creed, which ought never to be diminished, or enervated, is this: 'I believe in God the Father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth.'

Lett. vii. p. 128, or 479. 'Now upon examination into the scriptures, it will appear, that 'this Messiah, or Christ, was the same person with the great archangel Michael, who was the 'guardian angel of Israel.'

For which the learned author alleges, 1 Cor. x. 4 and 9. and Heb. xi. 26. But as none of

[a] More texts to the like purpose may be seen alleged above at p. 380, note [a]

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those texts appear to be at all to the purpose, for which they are alleged, I need not stay to explain them.

That our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ is not an angel is evident from many plain texts of scripture. Heb. i. 4—6. "Being made so much better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?—And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world he saith: And let all the angels of God worship him." See also ver. 7, and ver. 13, 14. Ch. ii. 5. "But unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, of which we now speak." Ver. 16. "For verily he did not lay hold of angels; but he laid hold of the seed of Abraham." See likewise the preceding part of that chapter.

And when our blessed Saviour is mentioned with angels, he is distinguished from them. "I charge thee," says Paul, "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels," 1 Tim. v. 21. And St. John, "Grace unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come: and from the seven spirits which are before the throne: and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness," Rev. i. 4, 5. Not now to mention any other like texts.

These must be sufficient to satisfy us that Jesus Christ is not an angel, or one of the angelical order of beings: or we can be assured of nothing.

However, I must not omit Mal. iii. 1. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom ye delight."

Here the Messiah is spoken of as the messenger, or angel of the covenant. Tertullian, referring to this text, or to Is. ix. 6. says 'Christ is an angel by office, but not by nature.' Dictus est quidem magni consilii angelus, id est, nuntius: officii non naturæ vocabulo. Magnum enim cogitatum Patris super hominum restitutione annunciaturus seculo erat. De Carne Christi. cap. 14. p. 370.

And St. Paul writes Heb. iii. 1. "Wherefore, holy brethren,—consider the apostle, and High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ." Which is paraphrased by Dr. Sykes in this manner: 'It is your duty to consider him, as a messenger sent by God, and as the High Priest of 'our profession.'

Lett. vii. p. 132, or 482. 'And therefore, "in the fulness of time," saith the apostle, '"God sent forth his beloved Son, to be made of a woman," that is, to take human nature upon 'him.' Gal. iv. 4.

The words of the apostle are these: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." It is not, "to be made," but "made of a woman, made under the law." γενομενον εκ γυναικος, γενομενον υπο νομον, al. νομε: factum ex muliere, factum sub lege.

And the note of Grotius upon the text should be observed. Εξαπεστειλεν—misit Deus Filium suum, primogenitum, ad quem, absente patre, cura pertinebat. Misit, id est, potestatem ei dedit eximiam—factum ex muliere: non creatum eo modo, quo Adamus creatus erat, sed natum partu muliebri, quo nobis esset similior: factum sub lege, id est, subditum Legi, quia scilicet natus erat Judæus.

Lett. v. p. 78, or 441. 'And therefore it manifestly appears from hence, that there is no 'contradiction, either to reason or revelation, in supposing that three persons of Father, Son 'and Holy Ghost, to be three Gods, provided it be not at the same sime asserted, that these 'three Gods are one God, or that the Son and Holy Spirit are self-existent, or co-eternal or co-'equal with God the Father.'

But is not that an express contradiction to St. Paul, who says, "We know that there is no other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are gods many and lords many.) But to us (Christians) there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus, by whom are all things, and we by him," 1 Cor. viii. 4—6.

And Eph. iv. 5, 6. "One Lord,—one God and Father of all." And Philip. ii. 11.—"that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Many other texts might be mentioned, but I forbear.

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Lett. v. p. 83, 84, or 445. 'To which being "anointed,"[a] Acts iv. 27, 28, or appointed of 'God, he is therefore called the "Messiah, [or] Christ," which literally signify "the anointed." 'And accordingly, at the same time that we are informed of the transgression of our first pa- 'rents, we are told for our comfort that the seed of the woman shall bruise that serpent's head 'which had occasioned their fall. Which was accordingly done, when the Messiah, whose spirit 'was of a superior order to mankind, condescended to take human nature upon himself, by 'being born of the virgin Mary, and went through that scene of trials and afflictions, to which 'he was anointed.'

It is not unlikely that some others may speak after the same manner; but to me it seems very improper; for, as a judicious writer says, 'That name can denote only a person who has 'received gifts, graces, perfections and a dignity which he did not possess of himself.'

Chrysostom, accordingly says, 'That Jesus was called Christ from the anointing of the 'Spirit, which was poured out upon him, as man.' Και χριςος δε απο τε χρισθηναι λεγεται, ο και αυτο τε σαρκος ην· και ποιφ, Φησιν, ελαιφ εχρισθη; Ἐλαιφ μεν ȣ̓κ εχρισθη, πνευματι δε. Chr. in ep. ad Rom. hom. i. T. IX. p. 430.

To the like purpose Augustin.[b] And, certainly very agreeably to the scriptures. Therefore it is said: "You know——how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil. For God was with him." Acts x. 38.

And says Mr. Abraham Le Moine, in his Treatise on Miracles, p. 51. 'As to those other 'passages, wherein it is said, that "he was full of the Holy Ghost." Luke iv. 1. that "God 'gave him not the spirit by measure," John iii. 34. that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with 'the Holy Ghost, and with power," Acts x. 38. they visibly relate to our Saviour's human 'nature.'

Lett. v. p. 85. or 446. 'For if the divine essence, or Godhead, did not enter into the womb 'of the virgin; when was it, that that "fulness of the Godhead which dwelt in him bodily," 'Col. ii. 9. did enter into him?'

Here I must take the liberty to say, that I do not approve of curious inquiries in things of religion: and that I am afraid to attempt to answer such inquiries particularly, lest I should advance what cannot be clearly made out by the authority of scripture.

However, in general I answer, in the first place, that the text in Col. ii. 9. does not speak of "a superior order to mankind," as the author said just now, or, as he expresseth it elsewhere, p. 66, or 430, "a separate spirit from the Father, and inferior to him." St. Paul's expression is, "the fulness of the Deity." And there is but one Deity, or God, even the Father. Thereby therefore must be meant the Father's fulness. So it is said in Eusebius's Commentary upon Psal. xliv. otherwise xlv.[c] 'All the Father's grace was poured out upon the beloved; for it was 'the Father that spake in him.'

And upon Ps. lxxi, or lxxii. ver. 1. he says: 'This righteousness of the Father was given 'to the king's son, of the seed of David, according to the flesh: in[d] whom, as in a temple, 'dwelt the word, and wisdom, and righteousness of God.'

And upon Ps. xcv. or xcvi. referring to Is. lxi. 1. and Luke iv. 18. 'Showing,' says he, 'that his was not a bodily anointing, like that of others: but[e] that he was anointed with the spirit of the Father's deity, and therefore called Christ.'

Theodoret, who deserves to be consulted also upon Col. i. 9, 10. in his commentary upon Is. xi. 2, expresseth himself after this manner. "'And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon 'him."[f] Every one of the prophets had a particular gift. But in him "dwelt all the fulness of 'the Godhead bodily." And as man he had all the gifts of the spirit. And out of his fulness, as the blessed John says, we have all received.'

[a] C'est s'exprimer d'une manière fort suspecte, d'appeler la Nature Divine de notre seigneur du nom de Christ. Ce nom ne peut désigner qu'une personne, qui a reçu des grâces, des dons, des perfections, une dignité, qu'elle ne possédoit pas d'elle même. Beaus. Hist. Man. T. I. p. 115.

[b] Vid. Contr. Maximin. Arian. l. 2. cap. xvi. tom. VIII.

[c] Επει δε τε αγαπητε πασα ἡ πατρικη εις αυτον ενενωθη χαρις· ην γαρ ὁ πατηρ λαλων εν υἱῳ. In Ps. p. 188. D.

[d] Εν ᾧ κατῳκησε, ὡσπερ εν ναῳ ὁ τε Θεε λογος, και ἡ σοφια και δικαιοσυνη. In Ps. lxxi. p. 404. B.

[e] Τῳ δε πνευματι της πατρικης θεοτητος κεχρισμενον, και δια τετο Χριςον ανηγορευμενον. In Ps. xcv. p. 634. E.

[f] Των μεν γαρ προφητων ἑκαςος μερικην τινα εδεξατο χαριν· εν αυτῳ δε κατῳκησε παν το πληρωμα της θεοτητος σωματικως· και κατα το ανθρωπινον δε παντα ειχε τα χαρισματα. κ. λ. In Es. cap. xi. tom. II. p. 52.

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And, says Pelagius upon Col. i. 19. 'In others,' that is, apostles, patriarchs and prophets, 'there was some particular gift. But in Christ the whole divinity dwelt bodily or summarily.'

Secondly, I suppose, that this fulness of the Deity is the same with what is said of our Saviour in other expressions, in many texts of scripture.

As St. John says at the beginning of his gospel, the word, the wisdom, the power of God dwelt in him, and he was "full of grace and truth." And, as John the Baptist said: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." And, as St. Peter said just now, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power." All speaking agreeably to what is foretold. Is. xi. 2, 3. "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord," and what follows.

And this method of interpretation is much confirmed by the excellent passages of divers ancient writers just quoted.

Thirdly, I presume not to say when, or how our blessed Saviour was "filled with all the fulness of the Godhead." I observe a few things only.

It was foretold of John the Baptist, that "he should be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb," Luke i. 15. Which may have been true of our Lord likewise. However St. Luke observes in his history, after Joseph had returned to Nazareth in Galilee, ch. ii. 40. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom. And the grace of God was upon him." Afterwards, giving an account of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem at a passover, when Jesus was twelve years of age, he says, "the child Jesus tarried behind them in Jerusalem," and seeking him, "they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him, were astonished at his understanding and answers," ver. 41—47. It is added afterwards at ver. 52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Moreover all the first three evangelists, in their history of our Lord's baptism, say, that "the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him," Matt. iii. 16. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water. And lo the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending from heaven, and lighting upon him." See likewise Mark i. 10, 11. Luke iii. 21, 22. And Luke iv. 1. presently after his baptism. "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." And again, when the temptation was over, the evangelist says, ver. 14. "And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee." And in St. John's gospel, ch. i. ver. 32, 33. "And John bare record, saying: I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove. And it abode upon him." And what follows.

I close up these observations in the words of bishop Pearson upon the second article of the 'creed, p. 99. 'So our Jesus, the son of David was first sanctified, and anointed with the 'Holy Ghost at his conception, and thereby received a right unto, and was prepared for all those 'offices which belonged to the Redeemer of the world. But when he was to enter upon the 'actual and full performance of all those functions which belonged to him; then does the 'same spirit, which had sanctified him at his conception, visibly descend upon him at his 'inauguration.'

And afterwards, at p. 104, summing up what had been before largely said: '"I believe in 'Jesus Christ." That is, I do assent to this, as a certain truth, that there was a man promised 'by God, and foretold by the prophets, to be the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel, and the ex-'pectation of the nations. I am fully assured by all those predictions, that the Messiah so pro-'mised is already come. I am as certainly persuaded, that the man born in the days of Herod 'of the virgin Mary, by an angel from heaven called Jesus, is the true Messiah, so long, and so 'often promised: that, as the Messiah, he was anointed to three special offices belonging to 'him, as the mediator between God and man: prophet——priest——and king. I believe this 'unction, by which he became the true Messiah, was not performed by any material oil, but by 'the spirit of God, which he received as the head, and conveys to his members.'

* In aliis, hoc est, apostolis, patriarchis, vel prophetis, gratia fuit ex parte. In Christo autem tota Divinitas habitabat corporaliter, quasi dicas, summaliter. Pelag. ap. Hieron. T. V. p. 1070.

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Lett. vii. p. 135, or 484. 'And now, my lord, let any one judge whether this temptation of 'Jesus in the wilderness, looks, as if Satan thought the divine Spirit that was intimately united 'to the humanity of Jesus, was that of the supreme God? And can any one think, that a being, 'endowed with so much power, [should it not be knowledge?] as Satan manifestly was, did not 'know whether Jesus was the supreme God or not?'

'This is brought in with an air of much triumph. But may I not ask? Did not Satan know that Jesus Christ was his creator, under God the Father? For this learned writer argues, p. 78, 79, or 441, 442. that all things were made by Christ, and consequently Satan himself: however, I choose not to multiply words in exposing this observation, as founded in the author's wrong scheme.

The truth of the case is this. Jesus had been baptized by John. At which time he was publicly declared to be the expected Messiah. He also received abundant qualifications for discharging the high office into which he was inaugurated. Soon after which Satan attempted to surprise him by divers temptations. "When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said: If thou be the Son of God, [that is, if indeed thou art the Christ], command that these stones be made bread." Afterwards, "taking him into the holy city, he setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him: If thou be the Son of God, [that is, if indeed thou art the Messiah,], cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." And what follows. Matt. ch. iv. And are not all these insidious proposals made to our Saviour, as man?

The learned author having taken notice of the transaction in the garden, goes on. Lett. vii. p. 136, 137, or 485, 486. 'Here then we poor mortals are at a stand, being at a loss to know, 'how it is possible for one spirit so to torment another, as to put Jesus into such an agony as is 'above transcribed, from the very apprehensions of what he was to undergo. If he were to 'suffer NOTHING BUT WHAT IS WRITTEN concerning his scoffs, and scourgings, and crucifixion, 'and we may add all the sufferings and tortures which his human nature could possibly undergo; 'these surely could never have moved him in so high a degree; being only such sufferings as the 'prophets of old underwent, not only without dread, but with pleasure in their countenance. 'Heb. xi. 35, 36.

'Whoever therefore can suppose Jesus to have been terrified at these things, which could 'only affect his human part, must suppose him to be less than a man. Whereas, IF WE SUPPOSE 'SATAN LET LOOSE UPON HIM, by the permission of God, and empowered to attack him in 'his nobler part, in his angelic nature, while his divine Spirit, being encumbered with the 'load of flesh and blood, and fettered and confined within the compass of an human taber-'nacle, was disabled from exerting its full powers; well might he dread the conflict on such un-'equal terms.

'And IF NOTHING IS DESCRIBED TO US IN THE SCRIPTURES, BUT HIS SUFFERINGS IN THE 'FLESH, this we ought to conclude was done in condescension to our understandings, which are 'unable to comprehend, or have any notion of his inward sufferings: and for the same reason 'it was, that any outward sufferings were inflicted on him at all. Which being in their own 'nature insignificant and trifling, could not possibly be any trial of his obedience: but were 'inflicted on him by God for us, and for our sake. Who in compassion to our ignorance, and in-'firmities, was pleased to appoint some of his sufferings to be such, as were within the reach of 'our capacities to comprehend.'

Does not all this show the great inconvenience, and vast disadvantage of that opinion, which supposes, that a spirit of a superior order to the human soul animated our Saviour's body?

I think, that the incongruity of this has been fully shown in the preceding letter: and that if such a thing were practicable, that exalted spirit would swallow up the body, and sustain it above all pains, wants, and infirmities. But it is manifest from the gospels, and every book of the New Testament, that our Saviour had all the innocent infirmities of the human nature. Therefore the before-mentioned doctrine is not true.

This author is not quite a Docete, or does not profess so be so. Nevertheless he does little less than admit the force of the argument just referred to. He calls all the sufferings inflicted on our Saviour by men, and all the sufferings recorded concerning him, 'trifling and insignificant,' and says, 'they could not possibly be any trial of his obedience.'

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He thinks, Jesus Christ suffered: but it must have been owing to the buffetings of Satan. Of which however, there is not, as himself owns, any distinct account given in the scriptures. Is not this to be wise above and beyond what is written? It is manifestly so. But does that become a Christian? And they who are wise above, or beyond what is written, will generally contradict what is written.

This seems to be the case here. 'The scourgings, scoffs, crucifixion, and all the outward 'sufferings inflicted on Jesus were insignificant and trifling, and could not possibly be any trial 'of his obedience.' Nevertheless these are things much insisted upon, distinctly related, and frequently repeated in the sacred writings of the New Testament. And the writers of the New Testament, the apostles and evangelists represent them to Christians, as very great snd affecting, and a trial of the obedience of our great Lord and Master. And his patience under them is set before us as a moving, and encouraging example to his followers. And for these sufferings, and his patience, resignation, and meekness under them, he is represented to have been highly rewarded by God the Father, supreme Lord and disposer of all things.

So St. Paul, Heb. xii. 1—3. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before *him*, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of *God*. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds."

So likewise St. Peter, 1 Epist. ii. 21—24. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his month. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness. By whose stripes ye were healed."

See Philip. ii. 1—11. and many other places, and all the gospels, wherein are recorded our Lord's sufferings, and especially his last.

All these things are thus insisted upon as very considerable, and of great importance to Christians. So that it seems very strange, that they should be reckoned by any 'trifling and insignificant, and no trial of obedience.'

There is, I think, plainly a difference between this great Author, and our apostles and evangelists. Whence should this come to pass? Is it not, that he preacheth another Jesus? According to them, Jesus is a man[a] 'like unto us, and suffers such evils, as men in this world are liable to, in the steady practice of virtue: and he has set before us a most amiable, most animating, and encouraging example, under a great variety of contradictions and sufferings. For all which he has been highly rewarded by God the Father Almighty, who alone is perfectly wise, and perfectly good.

But according to this author, Jesus is an embodied angel, or archangel, and not capable of being much, if at all, affected by 'all the sufferings, and tortures, which human nature could 'possibly undergo. These, surely,' he says, 'could never have moved him in so high a degree,' p. 136, 137, or 486.

Indeed this writer pleads, that if the buffetings of Satan, or such sufferings, as he contends for, are not 'described to us in the scriptures, but his sufferings in the flesh; this we ought to 'conclude was done in condescension to our understandings, which are unable to comprehend, 'or have any motion of his inward sufferings,' p. 137, or 486.

For certain, all men, who advance a doctrine, without express authority from scripture, will endeavour to find out some reason for the silence of scripture about it. But no good reason can be assigned for the omission, here supposed and granted. 'His outward sufferings,' the writer says, 'were insignificant and trifling, and could not possibly be any trial of his obedience.'—— If they were not, should not some others have been recorded? The not doing it, surely, must be reckoned an inexcusable omission, and neglect in the sacred pen-men.

However, it is certain, they have recorded such sufferings, as they supposed to be a trial of our Lord's obedience: and his patience under them, as an example and pattern to us.

[a] So likewise says the prophet, "A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Is. liii.

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Our great author would have us suppose, 'Satan let loose upon our Lord, by the permission of God, and empowered to attack him in his nobler part, his angelic nature,' p. 137, or 486. And speaks of 'the buffetings of Satan,' p. 138, or 487.—'and the insults of Satan,' p. 133, or 483. But why should such things be supposed, when all the writers of the New Testament are silent about them? If any will invent, and describe such sufferings, it must be altogether unscriptural, and could be no better than a philosophical, or theological romance.

And may I not ask, what good purposes can be answered by this scheme? For we are neither angels, nor embodied angels, but men, placed here in a state of trial. And our trial arises from the good and evil things of this world, by which our hopes and our fears are much influenced.

To me then the contrivance of our great author appears both unscriptural, and unprofitable. Nor can I forbear joining in with the apostle, and saying: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God: because the foolishness of God is wiser than men: and the weakness of God is stronger than men," 1 Cor. i. 23—25.

However, at p. 138, or 487, it is argued after this manner: 'And therefore, when he 'was betrayed, and seized by the officers, that were sent to apprehend him, our Saviour 'said unto them: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness," Luke xxii. 53. Giving 'them thereby to understand, and us through them, that it was not only the hour of men's 'wrath, but "the hour of the power of darkness," that he so much dreaded, when he prayed 'to God the Father, to "save him from that hour." At which time he had not only the 'contradiction of wicked men to strive with, but knew that this was the time allotted by God 'for Satan, the prince of darkness, to exercise and employ his whole power in afflicting him.'

But really no such conclusion can be drawn from those words; where one and the same thing is expressed in a twofold manner, the more emphatically to represent the greatness of the trouble then coming upon our Saviour. As if he had said, 'But this is your hour: and indeed it is a very dark and afflictive season.'

Dr. Clarke's paraphrase is in these terms.

'But this is the time, wherein the infinite wisdom of God has appointed me to suffer. And 'Providence has now given you power over me, permitting you to execute your malice and 'cruelty upon me, that the scripture may be fulfilled, and the eternal counsels of the divine 'wisdom for the salvation of men fully accomplished.' To the like purpose Grotius upon John xiv. 30.[b]

And that this is the meaning of the words, may be argued from our Lord's manner of expression elsewhere, speaking of the same thing. So in John xvi. 32, 33. "Behold, the hour cometh, yea is now come,——that ye shall leave me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And therefore, when he mentions Satan, it is in the character of "the prince of this world." John xiv. 30. "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh; and "hath nothing in me:" which is thus paraphrased by Dr. Whitby. "The prince of this world 'cometh" by his ministers, Judas, and the rulers of the Jews, "and findeth nothing in me:" 'he himself having no power to inflict death upon me, in whom is no sin, and they finding 'nothing in me "worthy of death," Acts xiii. 28. Though therefore I am to suffer death, I 'do not suffer for any fault that can deserve it, or on account of any power he or his ministers 'have over me to inflict it. But I give up myself to death in compliance with my Father's will, 'and what follows.'

[b] Venit autem per homines sui plenos, quorum vis erat ἐξουσία τε σκότους. Grot. in Joh. xiv. 30.

THE END OF A LETTER ON THE LOGOS.

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A DISSERTATION

UPON THE TWO EPISTLES ASCRIBED TO CLEMENT OF ROME.

LATELY PUBLISHED BY MR. WETSTEIN.

WITH LARGE EXTRACTS OUT OF THEM, AND AN ARGUMENT SHOWING THEM NOT TO BE GENUINE.

I. *Extracts out of these Epistles, for showing the Author's Testimony to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.* II. *External Evidence against the Genuineness of these Epistles.* III. *Internal Evidence to the same Purpose, and their Time.* IV. *The Author anonymous.* V. *The Importance and Use of these Epistles.* VI. *The Conclusion.*

EXTRACTS. I. My extracts from these two epistles will relate chiefly to the books of scripture quoted therein.

1. In these epistles several books of the Old Testament are quoted: the book of Genesis several times: Exodus: the Judges, and several of the following historical books: the book of the Proverbs, often: the book of Ecclesiastes once: Isaiah once, and also the story of Susanna.

2. Out of the New Testament are taken several passages of Matthew, one [a] of Luke, several of John's gospel. The Acts of the Apostles may be supposed [b] to be referred to. I cannot tell, whether [c] there be a reference to Acts xxvi. 25. in some words, which I place below that others may judge. There are also passages out of the apostle Paul's epistle to the Romans, both the epistles to the Corinthians, the epistles to the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, the first and second to the Thessalonians, the first and second to Timothy, the epistle to the Hebrews, two or three quotations, which will be taken notice of presently, and many passages out of the epistle of James. But I have not clearly discerned any passages out of the epistle of Paul to Titus, or Philemon: nor out of the epistles of Peter, or John, or Jude, or the book of the Revelation.

3. I say, there are passages out of the several books of scripture before-mentioned. But there occurs not the name of any one book or writer, either of the Old or the New Testament: except in general, in the gospel, the apostle, meaning Paul, and the like.

4. The passages of the epistle to the Hebrews are these: 'But, [d] brethren, we are persuaded 'of you, that you will think of these things, which are necessary to your salvation. But we thus 'speak of them, because,' and what follows. Where the author must have had an eye to Heb. vi. 9.

5. I suppose likewise, that there may be a reference to Heb. vi. 15—19, as well as to Isaiah lvi. in a passage which [e] I transcribe below.

[a] Domino Jesu Christo ministrârunt mulieres e possessionibus suis. Ep. 2. n. 15. Vid. Luc. viii. 3.

[b] Porro Paulus, et Barnabas, et Timotheus, cum cæteris, quorum nomina scripta sunt in libro vitæ. Ep. i. c. 6. Conf. Philipp. iv. 3.

[c] ——et loquimur cum illis verba exhortationis et honestatis. Ep. 2. cap. 1.

[d] Confidimus autem de vobis, fratres, vos cogitaturos ea, quæ necessaria sunt saluti vestræ. Sed ita loquimur de iis, quæ loquimur, propter famam et rumorem malum, &c. Ep. i. c. 10.

[e] ——sed desiderat spem promissam et præparatam et positam in cœlis Deo, qui promisit ore, et non mentitur; qui major est filiis et filiabus, et dabit virginibus locum celebrem in domo Dei——Ep. i. c. 4.

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6. Again: 'For [a] he said: "Honour your elders, and when you see their conversations, and their manners, imitate their faith."' Which must be allowed to be a reference to, or quotation of Heb. xiii. 7.

7. The forms of quotation are such as these: For he said, in the place just quoted: 'They [b] who are truly virgins, for God's sake, hear him, who said.' Where he quotes divers passages from the book of the Proverbs. 'Such [c] virginity the Lord calls foolish, as he says in the gospel.' See Matt. xxv. 'Therefore [d] he said rightly to that generation.' 'And [e] of such servants it is 'said.' 'As [f] it is written.' 'And [g] they hear not him, who says.' Quoting the epistle of James. 'And [h] again he says.' 'Have [i] you not read of Amnon and Thamar, children of David?' In the next chapter. 'Have [k] you not read of the family of Solomon?' 'They [l] did not remember 'that saying.' 'Behold [m] we find what is written of Moses and Aaron.' 'For so [n] the holy 'scriptures speak in these very words.' 'As [o] the apostle said.' See 2 Cor. xi. 12. 'Whom [p] the divine 'apostle rejects.' 'Widows [q] whom the divine apostle refuseth.' 'Let us be mindful [r] of the 'word, which says.' See Eccles. vii. 26. 'As [s] we have learned from the law, the prophets, and 'the Lord Jesus Christ.' 'Let [t] us inquire and search from the Law to the New Testament.'

8. Farther he seems in several places to refer to a practice then in use of reading the scriptures in private houses, and at visits.

For [u] he blames some, whom he calls idle, 'who went about to the houses of brethren, and 'sisters, virgins, under a pretence of visiting them, or reading the scriptures to them, or 'exorcising them, or teaching them.' Representing his own and other good people's way of travelling, whose conduct is set forth to be an example, he says: 'When [x] we come to a place 'where there is no man, but all are faithful women and virgins, when we have gathered them all 'together, and find they live in peace, we speak to them in all purity, and read to them the 'scriptures.' Afterwards in the next chapter: 'If [y] we come to a place, and there be one 'faithful woman only alone, and nobody else; we do not stay there, nor pray there, nor read 'the scriptures there, but we flee away as from the face of a serpent, and from a dangerous 'snare.' And in another place. 'We do not sing psalms, nor read the scriptures to gentiles.' [z]

External evidence. II. Having made these extracts, it will be proper to consider the age and authority of the epistles from whence they are taken. When it was first reported among us, that Mr. Wetstein of Amsterdam had received out of the East a Syriac translation of two new epistles of Clement bishop of Rome, I said, it was a mistake. It was more probable, that he had received a Syriac translation of the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, and of the other epistle often ascribed to him. And if that was the case, the translation might be very valuable, and of great use, because we have not the epistle to the Corinthians entire, and of the other epistle a fragment only. And undoubtedly those two epistles, if entire, though in a translation only, would have been an acceptable present to the learned world. But I was mistaken in my conjecture. The report first made has been confirmed by the event. The two

[a] Dixit enim: Seniores vestros honorate; et quando videtis conversationes eorum, et mores eorum, imitamini eorum fidem. Ep. i. c. 7.

[b] Qui autem vere sunt virgines propter Deum, audiunt eum qui dixit. Ep. i. c. 2.

[c] Dominus enim virginitatem talem stultam vocat, sicut ait in Evangelio. Ep. i. c. 3.

[d] Propterea recte dicit generationi tali. Ep. i. 8.

[e] Et dictum est de talibus servis. i. 9.

[f] Sicut scriptum est. i. 10.

[g] Et non audiunt dicentem. i. 11.

[h] Et iterum dicit. i. 11.

[i] Nonne legisti de Amnone et Thamare, libertis Davidis? ii. c. 11.

[k] Nonne legisti de familiâ Salomonis, &c. ii. 12.

[l] Non enim recordati sunt dicti illius, &c. ii. 13.

[m] Ecce reperimus quod scriptum est de Mose et Aarone. ii. 14.

[n] Sic enim scripturæ sacræ testantur ad verbum. ii. 14.

[o] Sicut dixit apostolus. i. 12.

[p] Quos aversatur apostolus divinus. i. 10.

[q] —— aut cum viduis, quas fugit divinus apostolus. ii. 14.

[r] —— sed simus memores verbi dicentis de muliere ii. 10.

[s] Sicut didicimus de Lege, et Prophetis, et Domino Jesu Christo. i. 12.

[t] Inquiramus et scrutemur a Lege ad Novum Testamentum. ii. 7.

[u] Alii autem circumeuntes per domos virginum fratrum et sororum, prætextu visitandi eos, aut legendi Scripturas, aut exorcizandi eos, aut docendi eos, quia sunt otiosi. i. 10.

[x] Si autem contingat, ut nos recipiamus in locum, ubi vir non est, sed omnes sunt mulieres et virgines, cogantque nos pernoctare in illo loco; vocamus omnes illos in unum locum, ad latus dextrum——et quando congregatæ veniunt omnes, et videmus, quomodo in pace sunt, loquimur cum illis verba castitatis in timore Dei, et legimus illis Scripturas in verecundiâ, &c. ii. 4.

[y] Si autem recipiamus nos in locum, et inveniamus ibi unicam mulierem fidelem solam, nec quisquam alius ibi sit, nisi illa sola, non stamus ibi, neque oramus ibi, neque legimus ibi Scripturas, sed fugimus, sicut coram facie serpentis, et tamquam coram laqueo peccati. ii. 5.

[z] Propterea non psallimus gentibus, neque legimus illis scripturas. ii. 7.

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epistles received by Mr. Wetstein, and published by him, have been hitherto [a] unknown. It must therefore be very fit that we examine their title to this high original, before we receive them as genuine. In the first place I will consider the external, then the internal evidence.

In examining these epistles by external evidence we are led to recollect what ancient writers have said of Clement and his works.

1. Says Irenæus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul, who flourished about the year 178, in his books against heresies: 'When [b] the blessed apostles Peter and Paul had founded and established the 'church, (at Rome) they delivered the office of the bishopric in it to Linus——to him succeeded 'Anencletus. Next to whom in the third place after the apostles, Clement obtained the 'bishopric, who had seen the blessed apostles, and conversed with them——In the time there-'fore of this Clement, when there was no small dissention among the brethren at Corinth, the 'Church of Rome sent a most excellent letter to the Corinthians, exhorting them to peace 'among themselves, and reminding them of the doctrine lately received from the apostles, which 'declares, that there is one God Almighty, maker of the heavens and the earth, who brought in 'the flood, and called Abraham: who brought the people out of Egypt, who spake with Moses, 'who ordained the law, and sent the prophets.'

This is the only writing of Clement, which is taken notice of by Irenæus. If he had known of any other, why should he not have quoted it, the more effectually to confute and silence the unreasonable men against whom he was arguing?

2. Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, flourished about the year 170. Eusebius mentions an epistle of his to Soter, then bishop of Rome, 'In [c] which letter, says the ecclesiastical historian, 'he makes mention also of the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, testifying that it had been 'wont to be read in the church from ancient time, saying, To day we have kept the Lord's day, 'in which we read your epistle. Which we shall also read frequently for our instruction, as [d] 'well as the former, written to us by Clement.'

This, as it seems to me, affords an irrefragable argument, that there was but one epistle of the Church of Rome, written by Clement to the Corinthians.

3. We are also assured by Eusebius, that Hegesippus, who flourished about the year 173, made [e] mention of the epistle of Clement to the Corinthians.

4. Clement of Rome is several times quoted by his namesake of Alexandria, about the year 194. But he quotes only the epistle of [f] Clement, or [g] of the Romans, to the Corinthians.

5. Origen, about 230, has some passages out of Clement's epistle to the Corinthians in [h] his books of Principles, and in [i] his Commentary upon St. John's Gospel. He elsewhere [k] quotes a work called Circuits, ascribed to Clement.

6. We come now to Eusebius of Cæsarea, about the year 315, who having mentioned the order of the succession of the first bishops of Rome to Clement, whom he reckons the third after the apostles, adds: 'Of [l] this Clement there is one epistle acknowledged by all, a great 'and admirable epistle, which as from the church of Rome, he wrote to the church of the 'Corinthians, upon occasion of a dissension, which there was then at Corinth. And we know, 'that this epistle has been formerly, and is still publicly read in many churches.'

In another place [m] he speaks of 'the epistle of Clement acknowledged by all, which he wrote 'to the Corinthians, in the name of the church of Rome.' Afterwards, in the same chapter: 'It ought to be observed, that there is another epistle said to be Clement's. But this is not so 'generally received as the former. Nor do we know the ancients to have quoted it. There 'have been published also not long since other large and prolix writings in his name, containing

[a] Præcipuum vero, ut tandem ad rem ipsam veniam, manuscripti hujus ornamentum sunt duæ Clementis Romani Epistolæ, hactenus non ineditæ solum, verum nostri temporis eruditis plane incognitæ. Wetst. Proleg. p. v.

[b] Iren. contr. Hær. l. 3. c. 3. p. 176. ed. Massuet. Et Conf. Euseb. H. E. l. 3. c. 15. et 16. et l. 5. c. 6.

[c] Euseb. H. E. l. 4. c. 3. p. 145. B. C.

[d] ——ὡς και την προτεραν ἡμιν δια Κλημεντος γραφεισαν. Ibid.

[e] Ακουσαι γε τοι παρεστι μετα τινα περι της Κλημεντος προς Κορινθιους επιστολης αυτῳ ειρημενα. H. E. l. 4. c. 22. in. Vid. et l. 3. c. 16.

[f] Αυτικα ὁ Κλημης εν τῃ προς Κορινθιους επιστολῃ κατα λεξιν φησι. Str. l. i. p. 289. A. Paris. 1629. Vid. et Str. 4. p. 516. A. Str. 6. p. 647. A. B.

[g] Αλλα και ἡ προς Κορινθιους Ῥωμαιων επιστολη. Str. l. 5. p. 586. B.

[h] De Princip. l. 2. p. 82. et 83. Edit. Bened. T. i.

[i] Comm. in Jo. c. i. v. 29. T. 2. p. 143. Huet.

[k] Philoc. cap. 23. p. 81. Cant.

[l] H. E. l. 3. c. 15. et 16.

[m] L. 3. c. 3. p. 110.

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[c] Dialogues of Peter and Appion, of which there is not the least mention made by the ancients. 'Nor have they the pure apostolical doctrine.'

So writes Eusebius, who had so good opportunities for acquainting himself with the writings of Christians before his time: and, so far as we are able to judge, diligently improved those opportunities.

7. Cyril of Jerusalem, about the year 348, quotes,[a] or refers to a passage of Clement, which is in his epistle to the Corinthians.

8. Jerom in his Catalogue, written in 392, in the article of Clement of Rome expresseth himself in this manner: 'He [b] wrote in the name of the church of Rome to the church of 'Corinth a very useful epistle, which also is publicly read in some places——There is likewise a 'second epistle, which goes under his name, but it is rejected by the ancients. And a prolix 'disputation of Peter and Appion, which is censured by Eusebius in the third book of his Eccle-'siastical History.'

Upon this chapter we are led to make some remarks. 1. There was but one epistle of Clement universally acknowledged: which also was publicly read in some churches. 2. There was another epistle received as Clement's by some in Jerom's time. But he says, it was rejected by the ancients, that is, was not quoted by them as Clement's. 3. Jerom does not expressly say, that this second epistle was supposed by any to have been written to the Corinthians. But, possibly, some of those who received it, reckoned it to have been sent to the same church, to which the former epistle was sent. 4. Jerom was quite ignorant of any other epistles ascribed to Clement. Having mentioned those two epistles, he proceeds to the long disputation, which Eusebius had censured: and doubtless ought to be understood to confirm that censure with his own approbation.

Clement is mentioned in some other works of Jerom: particularly in [c] his Commentary upon the prophecy of Isaiah: where he expressly quotes the epistle of Clement bishop of Rome to the Corinthians. And much after the same manner twice [d] in his Commentary upon the epistle to the Ephesians. Clement is also mentioned by Jerom in the fifth chapter of the book of Illustrious Men, where is the article of St. Paul, in speaking of the epistle to the Hebrews. He is also mentioned [e] elsewhere.

There is yet one passage more of Jerom, of which particular notice must be taken. It is in his first book against Jovinian: who, as Jerom assures us, beside other things, said, 'that [f] 'virgins have no more merit than widows and married women, unless their works distinguish 'them in other respects: and likewise, that there is no difference of merit between abstaining 'from some meats and using them with thanksgiving.' Our author having quoted Matt. xix. 12, says, 'To [g] such [eunuchs] Clement also successor of the apostle Peter, of whom the apostle 'Paul makes mention, Philip. iv. 3, writes epistles, and almost throughout discourseth of the 'purity of virginity. And in like manner, [or and afterwards] many apostolical men, and 'martyrs, and others, illustrious for their piety and eloquence, as may be easily seen in their own 'writings.'

Mr. Wetstein, whose [h] words I transcribe below, says that here Jerom refers to the two

[a] Catech. 18. n. viii. p. 288. edit. Bened.

[b] Clemens, de quo Apostolus ad Philippenses,——scripsit ex personâ Romanæ ecclesiæ ad ecclesiam Corinthiorum valde utilem epistolam, quæ et in nonnullis locis publice legitur——Fertur et secunda ejus nomine epistola, quæ a veteribus reprobatur. Et disputatio Petri et Appionis longo sermone conscripta, quam Eusebius in tertio Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ volumine coarguit. De V. I. cap. 15.

[c] De quo et Clemens, vir apostolicus, qui post Petrum Romanam rexit ecclesiam, mittit ad Corinthios. In Is. cap. 52. T. III. p. 382.

[d] De quibus et Clemens in epistolâ suâ scribit. In ep. ad Eph. cap. ii. v. 2. T. IV. P. I. p. 338.

Cujus rei et Clemens ad Corinthios testis est. In Eph. cap. iv. v. 1. ib. p. 359.

[e] Et si Clemens, aut ille Apostolorum discipulus, aut ille Alexandrinæ ecclesiæ, et ipsius magister Origenis, tale aliquid dixerunt. Adv. Rufin. l. 2. p. 406. T. IV. P. 2.

[f] Dicit, virgines, viduas, et maritatas, quæ semel in Christo lotæ sunt, si non discrepent cæteris operibus, ejusdem esse meriti——Tertium proponit, inter abstinentiam ciborum, et cum gratiarum actione perceptionem eorum, nullam esse distantiam. Adv. Jovin. l. 2. T. IV. p. 146.

[g] Ad hos [eunuchos] et Clemens, successor Apostoli Petri, cujus Paulus Apostolus meminit, scribit epistolas, omnemque pene sermonem suum de virginitatis puritate contexuit: et deinceps multi Apostolici, et Martyres, et illustres tam sanctitate quam eloquentiâ viri, quos ex propriis scriptis nôsse perfacile est. Id. ibid. p. 156. m.

[h] ——quarum γνησιότητα et utilitatem nunc indicare atque demonstrare conabor. Proferam primo duo externa testimonia Hieronymi atque Epiphanii, quorum ille c. Jovinianum l. 1. 'Hi,' inquit, 'sunt eunuchi, quos castravit non necessitas, sed voluntas propter regnum cœlorum.——Ad hos et Clemens, successor Apostoli Petri, cujus Paulus Apostolus meminit,' Philip. iv. 3, 'scribit epistolas, omnemque pene sermonem suum de virginitatis puritate contexuit: et deinceps multi apostolici et martyres, et illustres tam sanctitate quam eloquen-

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epistles published by him. But 1. Jerom must be understood to mean the two well known epistles of Clement, of which he had spoken in his Catalogue: which are plainly the same, and no other than those spoken of by Eusebius of Cæsarea in his Ecclesiastical History, to which he refers, and indeed transcribes. It is the more reasonable, and even expedient, so to understand him, because the books against Jovinian were written about the same time with the catalogue: from which it appears, that he had then no knowledge of any other epistles of Clement. If he had, he would not have omitted there to take notice of them. And in his other works, as we have seen, he quotes no epistle of Clement, but his well known and universally received epistle to the Corinthians. Here he speaks of two, it having been then not uncommon to ascribe to Clement another epistle, beside that which was universally received by the ancients, as we saw him acknowledge in the Catalogue. 2. Jerom here speaks hyperbolically, a style very frequent with him, as all know, and especially in his books against Jovinian: where he so exalted virginity, and depreciated marriage, as to give general offence, though at that time virginity was in great esteem. In those epistles, says Jerom, 'Clement discourseth almost throughout of the purity of virginity.' The meaning of which really is no more, than that there are in his epistles some things favourable to virginity. Jerom may be supposed to refer to some things in ch. 21, 29, 30, 35, 38, 48, and 58, of the epistle to the Corinthians: particularly to such places as these, where Clement says: 'Let [a] our [or your] children partake of the discipline of Christ——Let them 'know how much a chaste love avails with God, how great and excellent his fear is, saving all 'who serve him in holiness with a pure mind. We [b] being the portion of the holy one, let us do 'all things that pertain unto holiness, shunning impure and unchaste embraces.' Among the blessed and wonderful gifts of God Clement reckons [c] 'continence, [or chastity] in holiness.' Again: 'Let [d] therefore our whole body be saved in Jesus Christ.'. Afterwards, in the same chapter: 'Let [e] not him that is chaste [or pure] in the flesh, grow proud, knowing that it is 'from another he received the gift of continence.' And near the end he prays, 'That [f] God 'may give them patience, long-suffering, continence, chastity, and sobriety.' To these and other things in the epistles to the Corinthians Jerom [g] may be supposed to refer. And he may intend a large part of that which is called Clement's second epistle: in which are recommended chastity, self-denial, and mortification to the delights of this world. Jerom might have a regard to that epistle from chap. 4, to chap. 12, that is, the end, so far as we have it. Where are such expressions as these: "keeping [h] the flesh chaste.' 'We [i] ought therefore to keep our flesh as 'the temple of God.' 'Serving [k] God with a pure heart.' And the like. That such expressions as these may be the foundation of what he says is manifest from what immediately precedes the passage which we are considering. 'It [l] is,' says he, 'an act of eminent faith, and eminent 'virtue, to be a holy temple of God, to "offer ourselves a whole burnt-offering to the 'Lord," Rom. vii. 1. And, according to the same apostle, to be "holy both in body and spirit," '1 Cor. xii. 34. These are eunuchs, who in Isaiah call themselves a dry tree——To these 'eunuchs Clement writes.'——The hyperbolical style appears likewise in what follows: 'In like 'manner many apostolical men, and martyrs, and others illustrious for their piety and eloquence, 'as may be easily seen in their own writings.' It is true, that many, beside Clement, have discoursed of chastity, and of purity in soul and body. But who are they, of whom it can be said, without an hyperbole, that they had written books, discoursing almost throughout of the purity

tiâ viri, quos ex propriis scriptis nôsse perfacile est.' Hic vero Hær. xxx. Ebionitarum n. 15. Αυτος Κλημης——Hæc tamen testimonia de nostris epistolis, quæ nemo non videt esse clarissima, et a Petavio et Martianæo, Epiphanii et Hieronymi editoribus, et ab omnibus, quotquot illa epistolis Clementis ad Corinthios præfixa legerunt, et a scriptoribus ecclesiasticæ historiæ, qui de Clemente egerunt, neglecta, id est, non intellecta, aut perperam de duabus istis ad Corinthios epistolis, in quibus tamen nec Sampsonis, nec prolixus de virginitate sermo reperitur, intellecta fuere. Wetst. Prolegom. p. v.

[a] ——τι αγαπη αγνη παρα τῳ θεῳ δυναται——κ. λ. Ep. ad Corinth. cap 21.

[b] Ibid. cap. 30.

[c] ——εγκρατεια εν ἁγιασμῳ. c. 35.

[d] Σωζεσθω το ἡμων ὁλον σωμα εν Χριστῳ Ιησυ. c. 38.

[e] Ὁ ἁγνος εν τῃ σαρκι μη αλαζονευεσθω, γινωσκων, ὁτι ἑτερος εστιν ὁ επιχορηγων αυτῳ την εγκρατειαν. Ibid.

[f] ——μακροθυμιαν, εγκρατειαν, ἁγνειαν, και σωφροσυνην. cap. 58.

[g] Et posteriora quidem loca de continentiâ virginali aperte loquuntur, priora vero licet castitatem in genere, ipsamque conjugalem, concernant, ab Hieronymo tamen in disputationis fervore aliorsum trahi potuerunt. Grabe Spic. T. I. p. 263.

[h] ——και την σαρκα ἁγνην τηρησαντες. Ep. 2. cap. 8.

[i] Δει ουν ἡμας, ὡς ναον θεου, φυλασσειν την σαρκα. cap. 9.

[k] Ἡμεις ουν εν καθαρα καρδια δουλευσωμεν τῳ θεῳ. Ib. c. xi.

[l] Grandis fidei est, grandisque virtutis, Dei templum esse purissimum, totum se holocaustum offerre Domino, et juxta eumdem Apostolum, esse sanctum et corpore et spiritu. Hi sunt eunuchi, qui se lignum aridum ob sterilitatem putantes, audiuut per Isaïam, &c.

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of virginity? And where are their writings to be found? Dr. Cave [a] understood Jerom exactly after this manner. As did [b] Grabe likewise: whose remarks upon this passage of Jerom are so clear and full, and, as seems to me, satisfactory, that I think it great pity Mr. Wetstein did not observe and well consider them. If he had so done, it might have prevented those scornful reflections upon Dr. Cave, and Bishop Beveridge, and the two learned editors of Epiphanius and Jerom, which are at p. v. of the Prolegomena. Godfrey Wendelin, as cited by Mr. Wetstein, Prolegom. p. vi. supposed that Jerom had an eye to the latter part of the second epistle, which is now wanting. And to the like purpose Cotelerius [c] in his note at the end of that fragment. And indeed it has seemed to me not improbable, that Jerom reckoned he had an advantage to his cause from the second epistle ascribed to Clement. And therefore here writing against Jovinian, when his mind was heated with his argument, he speaks of two epistles of Clement: though in his catalogue, where he writes as a critic and an historian, he speaks as if he thought one only to be genuine: nor has he quoted any other in his Commentaries. Nevertheless I am of opinion, that we have enough remaining of these two epistles, and particularly of that last mentioned, to justify our interpretation of Jerom: especially with that qualifying expression *almost*: which no man can think to be a mere expletive. 3. I observe farther. If Jerom had intended the two epistles published by Mr. Wetstein, he would have said: To these eunuchs Clement wrote two whole epistles in praise of virginity, and teaching how it may be kept pure and incorrupt. And the remaining part of the sentence, relating to other apostolical men, and other eminent writers, would likewise have been different. 4. If Jerom had had these two epistles before him, and had supposed them to be written by Clement of Rome, he would not have failed to make great use of them in his books against Jovinian, and in his apology for them. Moreover they would also have been often quoted in his other writings, where he recommends virginity, and gives directions about preserving it.

9. Epiphanius, who flourished about A. D. 368, and afterwards, in his article of the heresy of the Carpocratians, speaking of the first bishops of Rome, quotes Clement thus: 'For [d] he 'says in one of his epistles.' The passage there quoted, is in the 54th chapter of the epistle to the Corinthians, which we have. Hereby we perceive that Epiphanius acknowledged more than one epistle of Clement. And we have learned from Jerom, that about that time it was not uncommon to speak of two epistles, as written by Clement.

In another place, the heresy of the Ebionites, says Epiphanius: 'There are other books 'used by them, as the Circuits of Peter, written by Clement: [probably meaning the recog-'nitions] in which they have made many interpolations. But [e] Clement himself confutes them 'in the circular letters written by him, which are read in the holy churches——He teaches 'virginity, which they reject. He commends Elias, and David, and Samson, and all the 'prophets, whom they abuse.'

Mr. Wetstein [f] thinks, that Epiphanius here intends the epistles published by him. But to me it appears plain, that Epiphanius intends the two epistles spoken of by Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History, and by Jerom in his Catalogue, and which we have had published now above a century by Patrick Young, from whence several other editions have been since made. For the epistles here spoken of by Epiphanius were circular, and read in the churches. So were ours. Indeed Eusebius and Jerom speak of but one only publicly read in christian assemblies. But the other might be so read likewise. There is reason to think, that both were read in some

[a] Cæterum haud satis constat, quid sibi velit Hieronymus, cum de epistolis a Clemente ad Corinthios scriptis verba faciens, 'omnem pene sermonem suum de virginitatis puritate Clementem contexuisse,' scribat. Neque enim alias ab hisce quæ nunc extant epistolas ad Corinthios dedisse Clementem credi potest, nec in his utramque faciunt paginam virginitatis laudes. Id potius dicendum videtur, Hieronymum nimio virginitatis studio abreptum, hyperbolicâ dictione usum esse, cumque Clemens pauculas periodos animi corporisque puritati docendæ impendat, totum sermonem virginitatis encomio dicatum esse voluisse. H. L. T. i. p. 20. De Clemente.

[b] Hieronymus vero acriter disputans contra errorem Joviniani, eamdem conjugii ac virginitatis dignitatem coram Deo statuentis, hyperbolice ait, 'Clementem omnem pene sermonem suum de virginitatis puritate contexuisse.' Quales hyperbolicæ locutiones in ipsius scriptis, inque ipso illo contra Jovinianum, haud infrequentes occurrunt. Spic. T. i. p. 264.

[c] Verisimile sit ex Epiphanio H. 30. cap. 15. et Hieronymo i. adversus Jovinianum 7. Apostolicum nostrum in iis quæ desiderantur istius epistolæ, de virginitate disseruisse non paucis. Cot. ap. Patr. Ap. p. 188.

[d] Λεγει γαρ εν μια των επιστολων αυτου. κ. λ. H. 27. n. 6. p. 107.

[e] ——ως αυτος Κλημης αυτους κατα παντα ελεγχει, αφ' ων εγραψεν επιστολων εγκυκλιων των εν ταις αγιαις εκκλησιαις αναγινωσκομενων——Αυτος γαρ παρθενιαν διδασκει, και αυτοι ου δεχονται. Αυτος γαρ εγκωμιαζει Ηλιαν και Δαβιδ και Σαμψων, και παντας τους προφητας, ους ουτοι βδελυσσονται. H. 30. n. xv. p. 139.

[f] See before note [h], p. 435.

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churches. For the eighty-fifth apostolical canon, as it is called, reckons two epistles of Clement among the books of the New [a] Testament. And our two epistles were at the end of the Alexandrian manuscript, after the books of scripture generally received: which affords an argument, that both these epistles were publicly read in the place where it was written: and it should be taken notice of by us, that here we have two new witnesses to the number of Clement's epistles, as two only. If Jerom could say of our epistles, (as we have seen he might) that Clement almost throughout discourseth of the purity of virginity, Epiphanius might say, he teacheth it. He also says, that Clement commends Elias, David, Samson, and all the prophets, which is the proper character of Clement's epistle to the Corinthians, though not the whole of it, and particularly insisted on by that early writer Irenæus: in which, says he, 'Clement 'exhorts the Corinthians to peace among themselves, and reminds them of the doctrine lately 'received from the apostles: which declares, that there is one God Almighty, maker of the 'heavens and the earth, who called Abraham, who spake to Moses, and sent the prophets.' All which perfectly suits the epistle to the Corinthians, which we still have in our hands, and in the name of Clement, as may appear to any upon consulting ch. 17, 18, 19, 20, 43, and other places. Mr. Wetstein objects, that Samson is not named in the epistle just mentioned, whereas he is in his. But though we do not now find Samson's name in what remains of that epistle, he may have been there. And as we have it not entire, I think it would be presumption to say he was not there named.

10. Photius, patriarch of Constantinople in the ninth century, has two articles for Clement bishop of Rome. In the first he says, 'That [b] Clement wrote a valuable epistle to the Corin-'thians, which is so esteemed by many, as to be read publicly. But that which is called the 'second to the same is rejected as spurious.'

In the other article he speaks [c] of two epistles of Clement to the Corinthians, bound together in one book or volume: and he distinctly gives the character of each, with regard to their style and doctrine; but says nothing particularly about the genuineness of either.

11. Nicephorus Callisti, in the fourteenth century, so agrees with Eusebius of Cæsarea, that I need not take any particular notice of him.

12. Mr. Wetstein [d] seems to suppose, that Dionysius Barsalibi, bishop of Amida near the end of the twelfth century, of whom there is an account in Dr. Asseman's *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, speaks of another letter of Clement, written against those who rejected marriage. 'Barsalibi,' says [e] Asseman, 'beside Ephrem, Chrysostom, and other authors, cites an epistle of 'Clement against those who rejected marriage.' Upon which I observe, 1. It does not certainly appear what Clement is here spoken of. 2. If Clement of Rome be intended, Barsalibi must mean one of the two epistles spoken of by Eusebius, Jerom, Epiphanius, and Photius, provided he deserves any regard; for there never were any other epistles ascribed to him by learned Christians in former times. And it may be reckoned very likely, that Barsalibi cited the first epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, particularly ch. 1, or 21. So, on account of some things in that epistle Epiphanius might say, that Clement teaches virginity, and Jerom, that almost throughout he discourseth of the purity of virginity. And with regard to some other passages Barsalibi might say, that he wrote against those who rejected marriage. In like manner a learned writer might say, that St. Paul in his epistles recommends virginity; and another, suitably to the argument, of which he is treating, may say, he vindicates marriage. And both those authors would be understood to mean the same epistles. Yea they might both cite, or refer to one and the same epistle, for their several ends and purposes, particularly the first epistle to the Corinthians. Not now to instance in any other.

13. Mr. Wetstein says farther, 'That [f] probably these two epistles were suppressed, or laid 'aside, because of the strictness of the rules of piety contained therein.' Which to me appears

[a] Κλημεντος επιστολαι δυο.

[b] Αυτος και επιστολην αξιολογον προς Κορινθιους γραφει, ητις παρα πολλοις αποδοχης ηξιωθη, ως και δημοσια αναγινωσκεσθαι. Η δε λεγομενη δευτερα προς αυτους, ως νοθος, αποδοκιμαζεται. Cod. 113. p. 289.

[c] Αναγνωσθη βιβλιδαριον, εν ω Κλημεντος επιστολαι προς Κορινθιους δυο ανεφεροντο. Cod. 126. p. 305.

[d] Prolegom. p. vii. m.

[e] Præter Ephræmum vero, Chrysostomum,——quibus Barsalibæum usum fuisse, supra dixi, auctores hi ab ipso citantur, videlicet, Dionysius epist. ad Timotheum: Clemens adversus eos qui matrimonium rejiciunt. Asseman. Bib. Or. T. II. p. 158.

[f] Tantum vero abest ut mirer, austeram Clementis disciplinam in epistolis istis traditam non placere, ut potius propter hanc ipsam causam eas et dudum sepositas esse, et per tot secula in tenebris latuisse existimem. Proleg. p. vii. fin.

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a false and injurious reflection upon the Christians of the early ages. There always were, especially in the first five centuries, pastors, and other eminent men, who approved of, and were themselves able to give right instructions for a good life. Nor can it be denied, that they were sufficiently zealous for virginity. They have preserved and handed down to us the scriptures of the New Testament, than which no writings whatever have delivered better directions for the practice of strict virtue. And why should any man think, that the primitive Christians would designedly suppress any writings of Clement of Rome, who was highly esteemed by all catholics in general, and by some others likewise? Insomuch that there works forged in his name, and ascribed to him, which had not the apostolical doctrine. We are well assured, that his epistle to the Corinthians was read in many churches, and the other likewise in some. If there had been any other epistles of Clement, they would have been esteemed, and often quoted, and not suppressed, or laid aside in obscurity. And how comes Mr. Wetstein now to speak of his epistles as obscure, when before he supposed them to be the same that had been quoted by Jerom in his books against Jovinian, and the same which Epiphanius said were read in the holy churches? Are these things consistent?

14. Upon the whole it appears to me very clear, that there never were more than two epistles of Clement bishop of Rome, received by Christians in former times. Those two I suppose to be the same which are at the end of the Alexandrian manuscript, and now are, and for more than a century have been well known to the learned. Suppose a man should say, that he had found two epistles of the apostle Paul, or the apostle Peter, which for many ages past have been unknown, would he deserve to be credited? It is almost as strange and surprising for any man to say the like of Clement of Rome, a man so highly esteemed in all antiquity, and so much taken notice of by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Jerom, Photius, and others. The epistles therefore, which have been published by Mr. Wetstein, are not Clement's. They cannot be his. There is no need to open the packet. Thus much may be certainly known without looking into it.

III. INTERNAL EVIDENCE. However, as we have already taken a view of these epistles, and have made some extracts out of them, we will now examine them more distinctly. And however good and pious they may be, it is likely, there will still offer more reasons for confirming the persuasion that they were not written by Clement.

1. And in the first place I observe, that the quotations of scripture, and forms of quoting the scriptures, in these epistles, are different from those in the universally acknowledged epistle to the Corinthians: for that is the epistle to which I shall have an eye: it being, in my opinion,[a] the only genuine writing of that apostolical man, Clement of Rome. 1. The author of these epistles useth some phrases and expressions concerning the scriptures not found in Clement, nor in any of the apostolical fathers, that I remember. 'As we have learned from the law and 'the prophets, and the Lord Jesus Christ: the law and the New Testament: the divine apostle.' 2. In these epistles many more [b] books of the New Testament are quoted, than in the acknowledged epistle of Clement. 3. This writer's forms of quotation of the Old Testament are different from those of Clement. What are this writer's forms may be seen in the extracts at the beginning of this dissertation. In Clement's epistle to the Corinthians the forms of quotation

[a] I am not singular in that opinion, which is much confirmed, as any may perceive, by the testimonies of ancient writers largely alleged here in the article of external evidence. H. Grotius declared himself to the like purpose in the year 1634, in his judgment upon these epistles, the year after their publication by P. Young. Alteram epistolam, cujus fragmentum additum est, quamquam Clementis et ipsa in libris nonnullis nomen prætulit, non esse tamen ei tribuendam, etiam veteres judicârunt. Quorum auctoritati accedit characteris diversitas. H. Gr. ep. 347. Grabe, who has since carefully examined the early writings of Christianity, is clearly of the same opinion, induced thereto chiefly by the letter of Dionysius Bishop of Corinth, and the silence of ancient writers before Eusebius, concerning any second epistle of Clement——pluraque sunt, quæ pene demonstrare mihi videntur, epistolam secundam Clementis ad Corinthios suppositiam esse. Et primo quidem maxime considerandum est testimoniam Dionysii, Episcopi Corinthiorum, proxime post Clementem seculo florentis——Spic. p. 265. Secundum argumentum contra secundam Clementi adscriptam epistolam suppeditat silentium omnium antiquorum Patrum, apud quos nullam ejus vel citationem invenit Eusebius—— Ibid. p. 267. And indeed, it seems strange to me, that any learned men should still quote the second epistle as Clement's.

[b] What books of the New Testament are quoted or alluded to by Clement, may be seen in his epistle, and in the large extracts made out of it in the first volume of this work, ch. ii. And at the conclusion of ch. iii. where are extracts out of the fragment of the second epistle ascribed to Clement, it was observed, that therein the gospels are several times quoted more expressly, than in Clement's epistle to the Corinthians. This was there taken notice of as an internal character, confirming the supposition that it had not the same author with the epistle to the Corinthians, and that it is of a later date.

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are such as these. 'The [a] ministers of the grace of God have spoken of repentance by the 'Holy Spirit. And himself the Lord of all has spoken of repentance with an oath.' See Ezek. xxxiii. 'And let [b] us do that which is written. For the Holy Spirit says.' And in the same chapter or section. 'For [c] the holy word says.' And in another chapter. 'For [d] him-'self bespeaketh us by the Holy Spirit.' 'Look [e] into the holy scriptures, which are the true 'sayings of the Holy Spirit.' Which forms of citation do not occur in the epistles published by Mr. Wetstein. I omit those common forms, in the same epistle to the Corinthians, 'It is [f] writ-'ten, and [g] the scripture says, and the like.' 4. Clement's quotations of texts of scripture, especially of the Old Testament, which are large and numerous, are neat and distinct. But the writer of these two epistles jumbles texts and books together, and quotes in a very confused manner. How Clement quotes may be seen by any, who look into his epistle. Having quoted a passage of scripture, when he proceeds to take another passage out of another book, or out of the same book, he usually says: 'And [h] in another place,' or the like. I do not deny, that [i] the writer of these epistles does also sometimes make use of like forms of transition. But oftentimes his quotations are exceedingly jumbled and confused. For instance, 'Therefore [k] he rightly 'said to such a generation: "My spirit shall not always dwell with man, because they are flesh. 'Every one therefore in whom is not the spirit of Christ, he is not his." As it is written: '"The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him."' See Gen. vi. 3. Rom. viii. 9. 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

2. Mr. Wetstein as an instance of agreement between the epistle of Clement, and the epistles published by him, says, that there is a doxology [l] in the middle of one of them. I suppose, that Mr. W—— may refer to the sixth chapter of his second epistle, at the end of which there is an Amen. But I see not there, nor any where else in these epistles, neither in the middle, nor at the endings of them, one doxology. Which therefore leads me to observe another difference between these epistles, and the generally received epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. For in that epistle, as has been often observed by learned men, there are at least seven or eight doxologies.

3. THE TIME OF THESE EPISTLES. There are several things in these epistles, which will directly lead us to the time and occasion of writing them, and assure us of their late age.

A passage above cited shows, that when these epistles were written, Gentilism was not extinct in the Roman empire. For I allow, that they were not first written in Syriac, but in Greek, as Mr. Wetstein well argues. When therefore this author said, as above; 'we do not 'read the scriptures to Gentiles:' I reckon it a proof, that Gentilism still subsisted in the country where he lived. Which indeed I imagine to have been somewhere in the eastern part of the Roman empire.

Farther, these epistles were not written until after some ecclesiastics had begun to have with them what were called subintroduced women: nor till after it had been taken notice of and censured. Upon this subject the late learned Mr. Henry Dodwell [m] has a curious dissertation. Bingham [n] likewise may be consulted. And some notice has been already taken of it in this work, [o] particularly in the history of Paul of Samosata.

There were some unmarried clergymen, who, for the sake of domestic affairs, had women to live with them. Dodwell [p] says, they were virgins consecrated to God. Bingham says, 'They 'were [q] commonly some of the virgins belonging to the church, whom they that entertained, pre-'tended only to love as sisters with a chaste love.' It appears from St. Cyprian, that [r] they dwelled together in the same house, and sometimes lodged in the same room, and in the same

[a] Ep. ad Corinth. c. 8. [b] Ib. cap. 13.
[c] Ibid. [d] Cap. 22. [e] Cap. 45.
[f] Γεγραπται γαρ. cap. iv.
[g] Λεγει γαρ ἡ γραφη. cap. xxxi. et passim.
[h] Και εν ἑτερῳ τοπῳ λεγει. cap. viii. Και παλιν εν ἑτερῳ τοπῳ λεγει. cap. 46. et passim.
[i] Ep. i. cap. 11.
[k] Ep. i. cap. 8.
[l] Stylus, δοξολογια in media epistola. Proleg. p. vi. med.
[m] Diss. Cypr. iii. De flagitio mulierum cum clericis concumbentium, &c.
[n] Antiquities of the church. B. 6. ch. 2. sect. 13. vol. II. p. 329—332.
[o] Vol. I. p. 622.
[p] Ubi supr. n. i. ii.
[q] As before, p. 331.
[r] Legimus literas tuas, frater carissime,—postulans et desiderans, ut tibi rescriberemus, quid nobis de iis virginibus videatur, quæ cum in statu suo esse, et continentiam firmiter tenere decreverant, detectæ sint postea in eodem lecto pariter mansisse cum masculis; ex quibus unum esse Diaconum dicis; plane easdem quæ se cum viris dormisse confessæ sint, asseverare se integras esse——Primo igitur in loco,—elaborandum est—nec pati virgines cum masculis habitare, non dico simul dormire, sed nec simul vivere. Cyprian. ep. 4. al. 62.

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bed. To the like purpose [a] speaks Jerom. Nevertheless they made solemn declarations of their innocence, and gave such assurances of being unpolluted by carnal commerce, as were satisfactory. So says Mr. Dodwell [b] upon the authority of a passage of St. Cyprian: which however still declares the practice to be unreputable and offensive. Leontius the Arian bishop of Antioch is censured by Athanasius [c] for cohabiting with a virgin. And he may be reckoned to be one of those, who gave proof of his freedom from carnal commerce.

We cannot dispute the truth of what St. Cyprian says, that in Africa some of these ecclesiastics and their virgins lay in the same room, and in the same bed. Nevertheless perhaps there were very few instances of this sort. St. Chrysostom has two homilies or orations upon this subject. One is 'against those who had with them subintroduced virgins.' The other, 'that canonical women ought not to dwell [or cohabit] with men.' It may be allowed, that he treats those whom he reproves with a good deal of politeness and tenderness. Nevertheless his argument is very cogent. Nor can any imagine, that John Chrysostom would extenuate the guilt of those whom he blamed, or dissemble any part of their fault. And yet I do not perceive, that he had received any intelligence of those last mentioned aggravating circumstances. He speaks of their dwelling [d] under the same roof, of [e] their cohabiting together, eating at the same table, sitting together, and discoursing freely and pleasantly in the day-time. But they did not lie together. [f] He plainly supposeth, that [g] they had different apartments, and that there were others, particularly women-servants, in the house with them. In that way of acting it may be reckoned, that their virtue would not be in any immediate danger. However, undoubtedly, notwithstanding such precautions, some would be suspicious; which was enough to render this practice offensive. And therefore the fathers of the council of Nice ordained in one of their canons, 'that no bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any of the clergy, should have an introduced 'woman, unless she be a mother, or sister, or aunt, or however a person liable to no suspicion.' But I need not enlarge further by way of introduction to my argument.

That this practice is referred to, and censured in these epistles, is manifest from some passages to be now produced. 'We [h] are persuaded, says the writer, that you will mind these 'things, which are necessary to your salvation. But we speak as we do, because of the evil 'fame and report concerning impudent men, who dwell with virgins under a pretence of piety, 'and put their souls in danger—It is altogether unfit, that they who are Christians, and fear 'God, should act thus.'

Setting forth his own conduct, and that of others, whom he represents as exemplary, he says; 'We [i] do not dwell with virgins, nor have we any concern with them. We do not eat 'and drink, where a virgin is. Nor do we lie [sleep] where a virgin lies. Nor do women wash 'our feet, or anoint us. We never lie [or sleep] where a virgin is, who is unmarried, and fit 'for marriage. Though she be alone, and in another place, [or part of the house,] we do not 'spend the night there.'

[a] Unde in ecclesias Agapetarum pestis introiit! Unde sine nuptiis aliud nomen uxorum!—— Eâdem domo, uno cubiculo, sæpe uno tenentur et lectulo, et suspiciosos nos vocant, si aliquid existimamus. Ad. Eustoch. ep. 18 al. 22. T. IV. p. 33.

[b] Quid deinde illud——quod cum summo animi nostri gemitu et dolore cognovimus, non deesse qui Dei templa et post confessionem sanctificata et illustrata membra turpi et infami concubitu suo plus maculent, cubilia sua cum feminis promiscua jungentes, quando etsi stuprum conscientiæ eorum desit, hoc ipso grande crimen est, quod illorum scandalo in aliorum ruinas exempla nascuntur. [Cypr. ep. 6. al. 7. al. 13.] Constat itaque, qui ita cum mulieribus concumberent, carnis tamen integritatem servâsse illibatam. Dodwell ubi supra, n. i.

[c] Ὁ μεν γαρ Λεοντιος διαζαλλομενος, μετα γυναικος τινος νεωτερας, λεγομενης Ευσολιας, και κωλυομενος συνοικειν αυτῃ, δι' αυτην ἑαυτον απεκοψεν, ἱν' επ' αδειας ἐχῃ διατριζειν μετ' αυτης. Apol. de fugâ suâ. p. 335. E. Vid. et Hist. Arian. ad Monach. p. 360. B.

[d] — της ὁμοσκηνιας ταυτης. Contr. eos. &c. T. I. p. 229. B. ——ὁμοσκηνιας ταυτης. Ib. p. 233, B.——της συνοικησεως ταυτης. Ib. D.

[e] ——νεος——κορῃ συνοικων παρθενῳ, και συγκαθημενος, και συνδειπνων και συνδιαλεγομενος δι' ἡμερας· των γαρ αλλων ουδεν προσιθημι——Ib. p. 231. B.——αλλ' ὁτι την αυτην ἐχων οικιαν, και τραπεζης, και λογων κοινωνων, και μετα παρρησιας πολλης. Ib. C.

[f] Ubi supra. p. 241. D. E. p. 254. fin.

[g] P. 264.

[h] ——sed ita loquimur de iis quæ loquimur, propter famam et rumorem malum de hominibus impudentibus, qui habitant cum virginibus prætextu pietatis, et conjiciunt animam suam in periculum—Prorsus non decet Christianos et timentes Deum ita conversari. Alii autem edunt et bibunt cum virginibus, &c. Ep. i. c. 10. Wetstein.

[i] Cum virginibus non habitamus, et inter illas nihil habemus negotii. Et cum virginibus nec edimus nec bibimus. Nec lavant mulieres pedes nostros, nec ungunt nos. Et prorsus ubi dormit virgo, quæ viri non est, aut filia nubilis, non dormimus: etiamsi sit in alio loco sola, non pernoctamus ibi. Ep. 2. c. 1. W.

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In another chapter. 'We [a] that are holy, do not eat and drink with women. Nor do 'women or virgins minister to us, or wash our feet, or anoint us. Nor do we lie [sleep] where 'women lie, that we may be in all things without offence.'

Afterwards in another chapter, 'Even [b] after the Lord was risen from the dead, when Mary 'came running to the sepulchre, and falling down at his feet, and worshipping him, sought to 'touch him, he said unto her; "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." 'John xx. 17. Is it not then wonderful, that the Lord permitted not that blessed woman Mary 'to touch his feet? And you dwell with them, and women and virgins minister to you, and you 'lie where they lie: and women wash your feet, and anoint you—Many holy women have 'ministered to the saints out of their substance, as the Shunamite woman ministered to Elisha. 'But she did not dwell with him; for the prophet dwelt in a house by himself, 2 Kings iv. 8—10. 'Women ministered to the Lord Jesus Christ out of their substance, Luke viii. 3, but they did 'not dwell with him. We also find that women ministered to the other apostles, and to Paul; but 'they did not dwell with them.'

I need not transcribe any more; here is enough, to show the occasion and design of these epistles. However, there is still one thing more to be taken notice of, which will fully determine the point. The people complained of by St. Cyprian, and others, were ecclesiastics, and women, who made profession of virginity. So it is here. Both these letters are addressed to virgins. And it is implied, that they were pure in body, or free from carnal pollutions. 'Who-'ever,' says 'the author, 'professeth before the Lord, that he will keep his chastity, ought to 'be clothed with every virtue; and if he has truly crucified his body for the sake of piety, he 'deprecates that saying, "increase and multiply," and all concupiscence, and all the delights 'of this world, and shuns all those snares, by which he might be endangered.'

And presently afterwards, in the next chapter, 'For [d] this cause he separates himself from 'the desires of the body, and not only deprecates that, "increase and multiply," but desires the 'promised hope, prepared and laid up in heaven, even a better place [or recompence] than that 'of those who have been holy in the state of marriage.'

Nor does this author any where charge those to whom he writes with any acts of uncleanness: but he advises them to [e] keep more out of the way of temptation, and [f] also to show a greater regard for the opinion of men, and avoid whatever might be an occasion of offence and scandal.

This being the case, we now see the reason of some things, which otherwise would not be easily accounted for. First, We see the reason of the address of these epistles, which at first seems odd and whimsical. They are addressed [g] to 'virgins, and virgins.' So in the first chap-

[a] Nos sancti cum mulieribus nec edimus nec bibimus, nec ministrant nobis mulieres vel virgines. Et mulieres non lavant nobis pedes, nec ungunt nos; et non conveniunt nobis mulieres; neque dormimus, ubi dormiunt mulieres, ut simus sine reprehensione, &c. Ep. 2. c. 3. W.

[b] Nec hoc solum, sed etiam postquam surrexit Dominus a mortuis, et veniret Maria ad sepulcrum currens, et sedens ad pedes Domini, et adorans eum, et quærens eum apprehendere, ipse dixit ei: 'Noli me tangere. Nondum enim adscendi ad Patrem meum.' Nonne igitur mirabile est de Domino, quod non permisit Mariæ, mulieri beatæ, ut tangeret pedes ejus; tu autem habitas cum illis, et tibi ministrant mulieres et virgines; et dormis, ubi illæ dormiunt; et lavant tibi pedes, et ungunt te mulieres?—Mulieres autem multæ sanctæ ministrârunt sanctis e possessionibus suis, sicut ministravit Sulamitis Elisæ; sed cum eo non habitavit; et ipse Propheta in domo seorsim habitavit——Domino Jesu Christo ministrârunt mulieres e possessionibus suis; sed cum illo non habitârunt. Etiam apostolis, etiam Paulo reperimus ministrâsse mulieres; sed cum illis non habitârunt. Ep. 2. c. 15. W.

[c] Quicumque enim profitetur coram Domino, se servaturum castitatem, debet cingi omni virtute sanctâ Dei, et si vere in timore crucifixit corpus suum propter pietatem, deprecatur verbum, dicens, 'Crescite et multiplicamini,' et totam mentem et cogitationem, et concupiscentiam mundi hujus, et delicias, et ebrietatem, et omnem amorem ejus, et otium ejus——et exinanitus est ab omni conversatione mundi hujus, et ex laqueis et retibus et impedimentis ejus. Ep. i. c. 3. W.

[d] Propterea separat se ab omnibus concupiscentiis corporis; et non solum deprecatur illud, 'fructificate et multiplicate,' sed desiderat spem promissam et præparatam et positam in cœlis Deo, qui promisit ore, et non mentitur——locum celebrem in domo Dei excellentiorem filiis et filiabus, et excellentiorem illis, qui conjuges fuerunt in sanctitate. Ibid. c. 4.

[e] ——et exinanitus est ab omni conversatione mundi hujus, et ex laqueis et retibus et impedimentis ejus. Ep. i. cap. 3. f.

——et conjiciunt animam suam in periculum; et eunt cum illis in semitâ et in deserto soli viam plenam periculis, et plenam offendiculis et laqueis et foveis. Ibid. c. 10.

[f] ——ut simus sine reprehensione in omnibus, ne quis in nobis offendatur, &c. Ep. ii. c. 3.

——et ne demus occasionem illis, qui volunt, ut teneant occasionem post nos, et loquantur de nobis mala, et ut nemini simus offendiculo, &c. Ib. cap. 5.

[g] Virginibus ('fratribus') beatis, qui constituerunt servare virginitatem propter regnum cœlorum, et virginibus ('sororibus') sanctis in Deo, salutem. cap. 1. Unicuique virginum ('fratrum') et virginum ('sororum')——Qui autem vere sunt virgines ('fratres') et virgines ('sorores') audiunt eum qui dixit——cap. 2.

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ter, and twice in the second, and frequently throughout the epistles. Which Mr. Wetstein, and rightly, as I suppose, renders 'virgins,' brethren, 'and virgins,' sisters. Chrysostom pronounced two orations for the sake of these people: one 'against those who had with them subintroduced 'virgins:' the other, 'that canonical women ought not to dwell with men.' But this writer applies to both together, and calls them virgins. Secondly, we now also see the reason why the good conduct [a] of the preachers of the gospel is so much insisted upon in these epistles. They were clergymen who offended in this point, and therefore needed to be admonished to take more care both of their virtue, and their reputation, and not to give offence to other people. Thirdly, that expression, relating to this matter, which we saw just now, 'men, who dwell with virgins 'under a pretence of piety,' appears remarkable, and leads to the following observation. The ecclesiastics, now complained of, were generally, or for the most part, men of religion and virtue. Being desirous to have the attendance and assistance of a woman in their domestic affairs, they pitched upon such as were virgins by profession, whom they judged to be the most unexceptionable of any, and least liable to suspicion. Determined to keep themselves pure, they supposed, that if notwithstanding all their care an evil thought or desire should arise in them, such persons would not encourage, but check and controul it. So 'they dwelled with virgins under a pre-'tence of piety,' as this writer says. It has often seemed strange to me, that these 'subintro-'duced women,' mentioned by ancient writers, were continually spoken of as virgins, and devoted to Christ, and the like. We here see the reason, why such were chosen and preferred to others. This observation first came into my mind upon reading these epistles; and it is referred to the consideration of the learned.

The time therefore of these epistles is to be collected from that of this practice. When it was first introduced, and when it ceased, may not be easily decided. It was taken notice of and censured by Cyprian about the middle of the third century. And not long after that time Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, and divers of the clergy of that diocese were charged with it. And if Chrysostom's orations upon occasion of it, were not composed till after the commencement of his episcopate, as the [b] Benedictine editors think, it subsisted to the end of the fourth century. And doubtless there were instances of it in the following century. Chrysostom speaks of it [c] as a new thing, that had arisen in that age; but the expressions of orators may be understood with latitude. However, it is very probable, that it did not appear in the early days of Christianity, nor till after the death of all the apostles, and their disciples, called apostolical men: consequently, not in the time of Clement bishop of Rome. And if the writer of these epistles refers to it, as I think he plainly does, he is not Clement disciple of the apostle Paul.

4. I observe, in the fourth place, that this writer exceeds in his praises of virginity, and in his recommendations of it. Mr. Wetstein is sensible, that [d] what he says is not agreeable to the Protestant doctrine. Nevertheless he thinks it is not unreasonable, nor unscriptural. If I am not mistaken, I could easily show, that a great deal said upon this head by the writer of these epistles is destitute of support and countenance from the doctrine of the New Testament. But instead of doing that at present, I would observe, that he differs from Clement, who in the first chapter of his epistle to the Corinthians says: 'You were subject to your rulers, giving 'becoming respect to elders. Young men you taught to be modest. The women you exhorted 'to do all things unblameably—loving their husbands, as is fit,—and managing the affairs of the 'house with propriety and modesty.' And in the 21st chapter: 'Let us respect our rulers, 'and honour the elders: young men let us instruct in the discipline and fear of God: our wives 'let us direct to that which is good, that they may show forth the agreeable behaviour of chas-'tity——And let our children be bred up in the discipline of Christ.' So Clement. Whether he was married, or single, I know not. But this apostolical man, to render his exhortations more forcible, joins himself with men in the marriage-state. Nothing of this kind is to be found in the writer of these two epistles. He scorns to touch upon these points. The virtues of the marriage-state are below his regard.

[a] Vid. ep. i. c. 11. 12. et ep. ii. passim.

[b] Vide Monitum. T. i. p. 227.

[c] ——Επι δε της γενεας ημετερας και τριτου επενοηθη τροπου καινος τις και παραδοξος. T. i. p. 228. A. B.

[d] Erunt fortasse, quibus harum epistolarum scriptor videbitur et matrimonio esse iniquior, cœlibatum vero nimium extollere——Aliterque, fateor, de cœlibatu et matrimonio sensit Clemens, quam M. Lutherus. At nondum probatum est, illum male sensisse. Wetst. Prolegom. p. vii.

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He differs likewise from St. Cyprian, who [a] in treating on this subject, adviseth rather that these virgins should marry, if they are not able to persevere in the purpose of purity.

He differs also from St. Chrysostom, who in the second of his orations before-mentioned, says to those virgins: 'If [b] you desire to have men to cohabit with you, you should not have 'chosen virginity, but should have married; for it would be better to marry, than to act thus 'in a state of virginity. God does not condemn marriage, nor do men disparage it. For it is 'honourable, offending none, injuring none. But virginity, in the company of men, is worse 'and more offensive to all, than fornication itself.' Afterwards in the same oration he says, 'it 'would [c] be better for these virgins to marry twice, than to act as they did, and be the occasion 'of so much scandal.' I refer [d] to some other like places in these homilies of Chrysostom. But nothing of this kind appears in these epistles.

He who should read what this [e] writer says in praise of virginity: how glorious, and how arduous it is, the great examples by which it is encouraged, and what peculiar rewards it is entitled to: must, I apprehend, think it strange, that for preventing ill consequences, and that men might not be led into a snare, he did not reckon himself obliged to add something concerning the lawfulness and purity of marriage, and the expediency of it for most men: which are so often intimated, and expressly asserted in the New Testament, and may be easily discerned by the reason, and observation and experience of mankind.

It is very likely, that before this practice obtained, the marriage of the clergy lay under some restraints. They who doubt of it, may read the notes of Gothofred upon a law of Honorius and Theodosius the younger, relating to this very matter. I transcribe from him a few lines only [f] below. The marriage of the clergy was not forbidden by any canon of the church, or law of the state. But it lay under discouragements, and was restrained by the prevailing opinion of men. Celibacy was more reputable; and many clergymen coveted the honour of it, who found it burdensome. And virginity likewise being much applauded, many women were induced to make a profession of it: who afterwards knew not how to perform their engagements, nor to get rid of them. Gradually the celibacy of the clergy, and virginity of women, grew more and more in vogue. And the high notions, which the writer of these epistles has of virginity, without saying any thing in favour of marriage, make me think, that he did not write soon, but rather not till a good while after the rise of the practice of which we have been speaking.

IV. THE AUTHOR ANONYMOUS. Who the author was, cannot be determined. Probably he was a bishop. It was most becoming a man in that high station, to write letters with exhortations to Christian people, especially to such as made profession of celibacy and virginity. Moreover it may be argued from the authoritative manner in which the second epistle concludes.

I do by no means charge the writer with imposture; I do not believe he had the least thought of such a thing. It should be observed, that there is not at the beginnings or endings of these epistles any distinguishing inscription. There is no name of the writer, nor any hint of his character and station. Nor is there any intimation of the city or country where they lived, to whom the epistles are addressed. There is only a title prefixed to these epistles, to this purpose: the [g] first, or the second epistle of the blessed Clement disciple of the apostle Peter. And at the end is that common phrase—'Here [h] ends the first, or the second epistle of 'Clement disciple of Peter.' These titles, or inscriptions, as I imagine, were placed there by some late editor, who did not know who was the writer of the epistles. It might be done by him igno-

[a] Quodsi ex fide se Christo dicaverunt, pudicæ et castæ sine ullâ fabulâ perseverent, et ita fortes et stabiles præmium virginitatis exspectent. Si autem perseverare nolunt, vel non possunt, melius est ut nubant, quam in ignem delictis suis cadant. Certe nullum fratribus et sororibus scandalum faciant. Cypr. ad Pompon. ep. 4. al. 62.

[b] Ει γαρ ανδρας επιθυμεις εχειν συνοικουντας, ουκ εδει παρθενιαν ελεσθαι, αλλ' επι τον γαμον ελθειν· πολλω γαρ βελτιον γαμειν εκεινως, η παρθενευειν ουτως· κ. λ. Ubi sup. p. 253. E. 254. A.

[c] Πολλω γαρ βελτιον ην, και δευτερω συναπτεσθαι γαμω, η τοιαυτα ασχημονειν. κ. λ. Ib. p. 265. D.

[d] Vid. p. 234. D. 236. D. E.

[e] Vid. ep. i. cap. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.

[f] Extraneas, inquam, mulieres vetantur clerici sibi adsciscere. Nempe ex quo cœlibatûs clericalis mos paulatim inolescere cœpit, atque hac etiam ratione clerici probabilem seculo disciplinam agere, seque seculo de cœlibatûs seu continentiæ voto commendare instituerunt, clam tamen atque aliâ ratione voluptates suas explere alicubi rerum experimentis visi sunt, κρυφη πορνευοντες, &c. In Cod. Theod. lib. 16. cap. 2. l. 44.

[g] Porro epistola prior beati Clementis, discipuli Petri Apostoli.

[h] Explicit Epistola secunda Clementis, discipuli Petri.

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rantly, or designedly; which of the two, we cannot determine. He might, I say, herein act honestly. Possibly he really supposed them to be the epistles of Clement; though, if he did, he was much mistaken. Or he might do it designedly, with a view to procure the more regard for the epistles, which he was publishing.

As there is nothing in the epistles to distinguish the author, or the people, to whom he wrote, I have suspected, that he was anonymous, and that he designed to be so. When he formed the intention to write upon this subject, he determined to conceal himself. He hoped, that his exhortations might in that way have the greater effect. Having thus fixed his resolution, he wrote in the form of epistles, upon the subject, which at that time was much discoursed of, and addressed himself to those who were chiefly concerned, sending them admonitions and directions according to the best of his judgment. However, this is only conjecture. For when these epistles were first published, the writer might be well known, though afterwards his name and character were forgotten.

V. IMPORTANCE OF THESE EPISTLES. From the extracts, placed at the beginning of this Dissertation, we learn, that the epistle to the Hebrews was received by the writer of these epistles. And from the numerous quotations out of the Old and the New Testament, we perceive the great regard which Christians had for the sacred scriptures. Of which we have seen many proofs in the collections that have been made from the ancient writers of the church.

We likewise discern, that at the time of writing these epistles virginity was in great esteem.

But if a true account has been now given of the time and occasion of these epistles, we cannot from them learn the date of any of the books of the New Testament. Mr. Wetstein, supposing, that these epistles were written by Clement of Rome, thinks, that [a] from the quotations here made of St. John's gospel, it may be proved, that St. John wrote earlier than many have imagined, or about the thirty-second year after our Lord's ascension. I do not now concern myself about the time of publishing St. John's gospel. But if these epistles were not written before the middle of the third century, no argument for the early age of that gospel can be drawn from the quotations of it by this writer. And though the writer were Clement, Mr. Wetstein's argument would not be conclusive, because the exact time of Clement's episcopate is not certainly known. At least there are different opinions about it: some placing it in the year of Christ 61, and onwards, others in 69 or 70. And others say, he was not bishop before the year 91, or 93. Many years ago, when I made my extracts out of Clement's epistle to the Corinthians, written in the name of the Church of Rome, it seemed to me most probable, that it [b] was written about the year 96. And the late learned Dr. Waterland, whose good judgment in such things is allowed, readily declared [c] his acquiescence in the reasons there alleged. These epistles therefore might be Clement's, and yet not written much before the end of the first century. Consequently, the quotations therein made of St. John's gospel will not prove it to have been written before the year of our Lord 70.

VI. CONCLUSION. I have now made a fair examination of these two epistles. I hope I have given no offence to Mr. Wetstein, or his friends. That learned man knows very well, that the pretensions of writings, which bear the names of eminent ancients, ought to be carefully weighed, before they are admitted. And I persuade myself, that upon farther consideration Mr. Wetstein will be convinced he has too hastily published these epistles as Clement's bishop of Rome. And I am apt to think, that he and other learned men will discern in them more marks of a later age, than have been taken notice of by me.

When tidings were first brought hither, that Mr. Wetstein had received two new epistles of Clement out of the East, several of my friends and readers signified their desire, that when they should be published, I would observe the testimony therein afforded to the books of the New Testament. Which service I have now performed, according to my ability. They supposed it to be a necessary part of the work, in which I have been long employed. Which is not barely a bibliotheque of ecclesiastical authors, or memoirs of ecclesiastical history, but was begun, and

[a] Hinc etiam consequitur, Evangelium Joannis non ab eo jam decrepito et fere centenario, et post mortem Clementis, sed diu antea esse editum, adeoque inscriptionem codicum Græcorum, qui illud Evangelium anno 32 post ascensionem Christi——scriptum fuisse testantur, ad verum propius accedere. Proleg. p. ix.

[b] See Vol. I. p. 292.

[c] See Dr. Waterland's Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist, p. 33. Cambridge 1737.

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has been carried on with a view of showing the truth of the Christian religion, particularly, the truth and credibility of the evangelical history, and the antiquity, genuineness, and authority of the books of the New Testament, the original records of the doctrine and miracles of our Saviour and his apostles. And all along great care has been taken to distinguish genuine and suppositititious writings. Which I now reflect upon with much satisfaction. In this method, witnesses, when produced, appear in their true time and character. And every one is able to judge of the value of their testimony.'

END OF THE DISSERTATION.

AN ESSAY

ON THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT OF THE

CREATION AND FALL OF MAN.

THERE are not a few difficulties in the account, which Moses has given of the creation of the world, and of the formation, and temptation, and fall of our first parents. Some by the six days of the creation have understood as many years. Whilst others have thought the creation of the world instantaneous: and that the number of days mentioned by Moses is only intended to assist our conception, who are best able to think of things in order of succession.

No one part of this account is fuller of difficulties than that which relates to man. And some learned Jews, as well as Origen, and others among Christians, have supposed the account before us, not to be a history, but an allegory. The present prevailing opinion is, that what relates to man is fact. And it is argued, that, as the true character of Moses is that of an historian; it would be unbecoming his judgment and exactness, to insert an allegory in the midst of historical facts, without giving any intimation of it.

I shall take the account in the literal sense, and shall go over it under these several heads or divisions. 1. The formation of man. 2. The trial upon which he was put in paradise. 3. The temptation he met with. 4. His transgression. 5. The consequences of that, with the sentence passed by God upon the tempter, and upon the transgressors, our first parents.

1. The first thing in order is the creation of man. For with that I begin, not intending to survey the other works of God, before made.

Gen. i. 26. "And God said, Let us make man, in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Ver. 27. "So God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them."

This may be reckoned a summary account of the creation of man, which is more largely and particularly related again in the next chapter.

"And God said: Let us make man, in our image, after our likeness."

It is common for Christians to say, that here is a proof of a Trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead. To which others answer, that the Jews never understood these expressions after

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this manner, who always believed one God, and that God to be one person only, except when they fell into gross idolatry, after the manner of their heathen neighbours. And many learned Christians are clearly of opinion, that the doctrine of the trinity was not revealed in the Old Testament.

These interpreters therefore suppose, that the style common to princes and great men, who often speak in the plural number, is here ascribed to God. Nor need the consultation, here represented, be supposed to be between equals. But God may be rather supposed to declare his mind to his angels, as counsellors. Nor will it be an invincible objection, that in this history there is no notice taken of the creation of angels. For there follow expressions, which may be reckoned to imply their existence and their dignity, and that they were not unknown unto man.

But indeed we need not to suppose any real discourse or consultation at all. The meaning is no more than this: 'All other things being made, God proceeded to the creation of man; or, he 'purposed now, at the conclusion, to make man.' And it may be reckoned probable, that Moses introduces God in this peculiar manner, deliberating and consulting upon the creation of man, to intimate thereby, that he is the chief of the works of God, which are here described. Or, in other words, according to Patrick upon ver. 26. 'God not only reserved man for the 'last of his works, but does, as it were, advise and consult, or deliberate about his production: 'the better to represent the dignity of man, and that he was made with admirable wisdom and 'prudence.'

It is here also worthy to be observed, that according to the account of Moses, a different method was taken in forming man, from that in which other animals were formed. Ver. 20. "And God said: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life." And afterwards, ver. 24. "And God said: Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth." They were produced by the Divine power, and command. But God is represented, as making man himself, immediately, to denote his dignity, and superior prerogative above the rest of the creatures.

Still at ver. 26. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." By which two-fold expression, it is likely, one and the same thing is intended. For when the result or execution of this deliberation and purpose is described and related, it is in this manner: ver. 27. "So God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him."

What is the "image," or likeness of God, intended by Moses, is not clear, because he has not distinctly expressed it: and we may now conjecture things which were not in the mind of the writer. Nevertheless I think the coherence leads us to understand hereby, as somewhat suitable to the mind of Moses, "dominion over the rest of the creatures of this earth," together with that reason and understanding, which is a main part of the superiority of the human nature above brute creatures, and qualifies man to rule over them, and subdue them, and make them subservient to his own use and benefit. So are the words of this twenty-sixth verse: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth." And the eminence of man is thus described, Job xxxv. 11. "He teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven."

Ver. 27. "So God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them." What we are first led to observe here, as connected with what was just said, is that the woman was made after the image of God, as well as the man.

And from inserting, in this summary account of man's creation, on the sixth day, this particular, that "God created man male and female," it may be concluded, that the woman too was made on that day; which, I reckon, is the general opinion of interpreters: though there are some things in the next chapter, containing a more particular account of the formation of man, that might occasion some doubt about it. Patrick, in particular, says, 'God made woman 'the same day he made man: as he did both sexes of other creatures, and as he made herbs and 'plants with seeds in them, to propagate their species.'

It is always supposed, that God made man in maturity of body and understanding. And some have been so curious as to inquire at what age: or what was the age he appeared to have. And in conformity to the great length of the lives of the antediluvians, they have supposed, he might have the appearance of a man of fifty or sixty years of age according to that time.

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Ver. 28. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them: Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." The Jewish writers are generally disposed to understand that expression, "be fruitful and multiply," as implying a precept universally binding. But the coherence rather leads us to understand it of a blessing or power: the like to which was bestowed upon the brute creatures, at ver. 22, which are not the subjects of a precept.

And here the privilege of dominion over the creatures is again expressed, denoting it to be common to both sexes, and designed to appertain to their posterity. "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it. And have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

It follows in ver. 29, and 30. "And God said: Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree, yielding seed. To you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth on the earth wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat. And it was so." Hence it is argued by many, that meat, or food of animal flesh, was not used before the flood. But that does not seem certain. It may be allowed, that for a good while, flesh was forborn. As animals were made by pairs only, it was not convenient that any should be slain till they were increased. It may be allowed also, that vegetables were very much the diet of those who lived before the flood: when, probably, all things were in greater vigour and perfection than afterwards. But here is no prohibition of animal food. And it is observable, that Abel and Seth, and all who were of the family of God, were keepers of cattle. And, if they were not allowed to make use of them for food, it would be difficult to show, how keeping cattle, not fit for draught or burden, especially in any large number, could turn to a good account. If it be said, they might use their milk; I answer, that is more than is clearly expressed in the grant. Moreover, sacrifices of living creatures were in use very early. It is not reasonable to think, they were all whole burnt-offerings. It may be reckoned probable, that they who brought to God sacrifices and offerings of living creatures, did partake of their offerings: which, certainly, was the custom in after times.

The first chapter of Genesis concludes thus: "And God saw every thing that he had made: and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Every thing was now formed according to the will, and purpose, and command of God. And every part of each day's creation, man in particular, was good, and such as God approved and designed.

Thus we have surveyed the summary account of man's creation, which is in the first chapter of the book of Genesis. At the beginning of the second chapter is introduced an account of the sabbath, and a description of Paradise, which I forbear to insist on: but I would observe what is farther said of the formation of the first pair.

Ch. ii. 7. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And man became a living soul." Man is made of the "dust of the ground." But thereby is supposed to be meant moist earth. And whereas it is said, "God breathed into him the breath of life," which is not said of any other animals: it is hence argued, that the soul of man is different from the body, and that it is a more excellent spirit than that of brute creatures.

Ver. 18. "And the Lord God said: It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him." Here, I apprehend, we are led to the same observation that was mentioned before, upon occasion of those words, which represented God as consulting about the creation of man. The design of those expressions was to intimate the great dignity, and superior excellence of man above brute creatures, whose creation was before related. In like manner, when God proceeds to the making of the woman, he is represented as consulting, and resolving what to do: that the man might be the more sensible of the goodness of the Creator in providing for him so suitable a help.

Ver. 19. "And out of the ground God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them to Adam, to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." Ver. 20. "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." This bringing the living creatures to Adam, and his giving them names, is a proof of his dominion over them.

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This representation of things would lead us to suppose, that Eve was not formed on the sixth day, but some time after, because her formation is here related after the living creatures had been shown to Adam. Nevertheless, as before hinted, that argument is not conclusive. Here we have only a more distinct account of what was before related in general. This may be strongly argued from the seventh verse of this chapter before taken notice of, concerning the formation of Adam, who, certainly, was created on the sixth day.

It follows at ver. 21. "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof." By this "sleep," as is supposed, all pain was prevented. It is needless to multiply words here, or nicely to weigh objections. It seems most probable, that in the first formation there was somewhat superfluous in Adam. It has been supposed, that he had a superfluous rib on each side, and that God took away one pair, with the muscular parts adhering to them, and out of them made Eve.

Ver. 22. "And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." Ver. 23. "And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man."

It has been thought not improbable, that Adam had an ecstasy, during the time of his deep sleep, showing him what was done upon him: which enabled him to speak so properly, when Eve was brought to him.

Ver. 24. "Therefore shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife. And they shall be one flesh."

This is sometimes called Adam's prophecy. For certain, if these are the words of Adam, he must have been inspired. For he could not at this time, in an ordinary way, have distinct ideas of the relations of father and mother. But many good interpreters think, that these should rather be understood as words of Moses, who by divine direction here inserted this law.

Ver. 25. "And they were both naked, the man and his wife. And they were not ashamed." This, certainly, must have been the case in a state of innocence. And therefore was proper to be mentioned.

And thus concludes the account of the formation of the first pair.

2. The next point in order is the trial, upon which Adam was put in Paradise.

Ch. ii. 9. "And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree, that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Of what kind, or for what use "the tree of life" was, we cannot certainly say: though the name of it might lead us to think, it would have been of use upon occasion of eating any thing noxious, or for restoring decays, and preserving the vigour of life.

"And the tree of knowledge of good and evil." It is doubted, why this tree was so called: whether it received its denomination from the event: or whether it was at first so called from the design, for which it was made and instituted, that it might be a trial of man's virtue.

In the 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 verses is the description of Paradise, which I pass over.

Ver. 15. "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it." Not that he was made out of Paradise, and then brought into it. But, when made, he was placed therein, to keep it in good order.

Ver. 16. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying: Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat." Ver. 17. "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Adam, as a rational creature, was subject to the law and will of God. He was necessarily bound by all moral laws and rules, and thereby obliged to love, honour, worship his Creator, and to love every creature of the same species or kind with himself, and to be merciful and tender of inferior beings, in subjection to him. But God was pleased to try him also by a positive law. And this would be likewise a trial of his virtue. For there can be no doubt but he was obliged to respect this law and restraint of his bountiful maker. And if he should disobey this law, it must be owing to some defect or failure of virtue. There cannot be conceived any reason, why he should transgress this command, unless some wrong temper, or evil thought, or irregularity and exorbitance of desire, (which, certainly, is immoral and sinful) first arose in him.

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"In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Literally, in the original, "dying thou shalt die." Which our translators have well expressed, "thou shalt surely die."

Hereby some expositors have understood death spiritual, natural and eternal. But I do not see any good reason they have for it. We seem rather to be justified in taking it in the sense of natural death only, or the dissolution of this frame, the separation of soul and body. We are led to this by the words of the sentence pronounced after the transgression: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou salt surely die." By which may be meant, that very day thou shalt become mortal, and be liable to pains and diseases, which will issue in death. Or, that very day thou shalt actually die. Which last sense may be as probable as the other.

That is the trial, upon which man was put in Paradise, and in his state of innocence.

3. The next point, the third in order, is the temptation which he met with: the account of which is at the beginning of the third chapter of the book of Genesis. How long it was after the creation of Adam and Eve, before this happened, is not said. But it is likely, that some days had passed. The serpent found Eve alone, and attempted her in the absence of the man. Nor would his insinuations have been received, we may suppose, if he had suggested disobedience to a command, that was but just then given.

Chap. iii. 1. "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, which God had made." It is generally allowed, that here was the contrivance and agency of Satan. But Moses speaks only of the outward appearance: and therein, as I apprehend, refers to, or intends the winding, insinuating motion of serpents. "And he said unto the woman: Yea has God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" This is somewhat abrupt, and, possibly, some other discourse had preceded. However, it is very artful: not denying what was most true and certain: but insinuating, that it was very strange, if such a prohibition had been delivered to them. And, possibly, Eve concluded, that she was now addressed by some angel, who wished them well.

Ver. 2. "And the woman said unto the serpent: We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden." Ver. 3. "But of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it: neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." By which we perceive, that the woman was well apprized of the command, and the strictness of it. And, probably, she was by, when it was delivered: though Adam only be particularly mentioned.

Ver. 4. "And the serpent said unto the woman: Ye shall not surely die." Ver. 5. "For God does know, that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Which last words may be thought to imply, that Eve was not without an apprehension of other intelligent beings, distinct from God the creator and man, and of an intermediate order between both.

In this discourse the serpent insinuates a wrong and disadvantageous opinion of the Deity, as envious of the high happiness and dignity which they might attain to. And Eve was much to blame, for admitting suspicions of the benevolence of him that made them.

4. I proceed immediately to our first parents' trangression, the accounts of that and the temptation being closely connected.

Ver. 6. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat." This is indeed strange. But from the serpent's insinuations she had admitted a dishonourable and disrespectful thought of the Deity, and then soon lost a just regard to the command he had given. She views this dangerous and deadly fruit with complacence. She looked upon this prohibited fruit, till she had an appetite to it, conceived of it as good food, and was taken with its beautiful colour, and possessed with a persuasion, that her curiosity would be gratified with an increase of knowledge. And according to the Mosaic account, which is concise, when Adam came up, and Eve presented him with some of the same forbidden fruit, he took it at her hand, and did eat of it. The account, I say, is concise. But it was needless to be more particular, after the clear account before given of the strict prohibition. Which sets Adam's fault in a conspicuous view. Possibly, the woman gave Adam an account of what the serpent had said to her, and represented it to him, with tokens of her approbation. He could have no temptation beyond what had been

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presented to the woman, beside the addition of her offer of it. Which, as it seems, was no small inducement to compliance, and to do as she had done, and whatever should be the event to share as she did.

Ver. 7. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed [or twisted] fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons." Upon reflection, their eyes were opened in a different sense from what the serpent had said, and they were filled with shame, not knowing what to think of themselves, or how to act. But they soon contrived a slight garment as for a covering.

Ver. 8. "And they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden, in the cool of the day." They perceived a brisk motion of the air coming towards them, with an increasing sound, that was awful to them. Or, in the words of Bishop Patrick: 'They heard the sound of the 'majestic presence, or the glory of the Lord, approaching nearer and nearer to the place where 'they were.' "And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." They who before had had converse with God, which was delightful, now retire into the closest, and most shady coverts, to avoid the Divine appearance.

Ver. 9. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him: Where art thou?" God summoned Adam to appear before him, and to attend to what he should say. Ver. 10. "And he said, I heard thy voice in the midst of the garden. And I was afraid, because I was naked. And I hid myself." Ver. 11. "And he said: Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? Intimating, that doubtless that was the occasion of all this confusion and disorder of mind, and of his shyness of the Divine presence.

Ver. 12. "And the man said, The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." He cannot deny his guilt; but he puts it off, as much as he can, upon the woman. And the more to excuse himself to God, he says, "the woman, whom thou gavest to be with me——"

Ver. 13. "And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." She too endeavours to cast the blame upon another. And though it was not a full vindication (far from it,) yet it was an alleviation of the fault. It would have been much worse, if she had eaten of her own accord, without a tempter.

Ver. 14. "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." Ver. 15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

It is an observation of an ancient Christian writer, in Patrick upon ver. 14. 'That though 'God inflicted punishments upon Adam and Eve, yet he did not curse them, as he did the ser-'pent, they standing fair for a restitution to his favour.' Undoubtedly, it must have been comfortable to Adam and Eve, to see the displeasure of God against the serpent that had seduced them. Nor were they presently cut off, as the threatening, annexed to disobedience, seemed to import. Yea God speaks of the woman's seed. Therefore they were not to die immediately, but were to have a posterity: meaning by her seed men in general, or the Messiah, and good men, who should prevail against the tempter and adversary, though they would suffer some injuries through his means: and calling it the "woman's seed," as some expositors think, to mollify Adam, and prevent his displeasure against her, who had led him into wrong conduct.

Ver. 16. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth thy children:" that is, I will add to the pain and sorrow of child-bearing. "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Thy will shall be subject to thy husband's. So it was before: but now his authority might be more rigorous and severe than otherwise it would have been. The punishment inflicted on Eve is suitable to the condition of her sex.

Ver. 17. "Unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife (where we see what was his chief temptation, and what was the nearest and most immediate inducement to him to transgress:) and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of

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it all the days of thy life." Ver. 18. "Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field." Ver. 19. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground; for out of it wast thou taken. For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

This part of the sentence, "returning to the dust," or dying, must be supposed common to both the man and the woman. And so far the first sentence takes place. They did not die immediately. But an irreversible sentence of death passes upon them, which would take place in a term of years, when God saw fit.

The rest of the sentence or punishment inflicted on Adam, is suitable to the condition of his sex, as the woman's was to her's, whose province, as the apostle excellently describes it, 1 Tim. v. 14. is to "bear children, and guide the house:" whilst the man has the charge of providing for himself and the family by his care, labour and industry. The punishment therefore laid upon Adam is, that his care, and toil, and labour, should now for the future be increased beyond what it would have been otherwise.

But here arise objections, relating to the execution of the several sentences pronounced upon the serpent, the tempter, and the two transgressors. The sentence upon the serpent was, "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."

This is thought a difficulty. And it is asked: Did not serpents go upon the belly before? Was not that their ordinary motion always? How else should they be serpents, if they wanted that which is their proper nature? With regard then to this, and the two other sentences of punishment pronounced upon Eve, and upon Adam, I would observe. It seems to me probable, that God foresaw the event; and that though Adam was made innocent and upright, yet he would fall. This being foreseen, there were dispositions made in the original formation of things, which would be suitable to what happened. Therefore the alterations to be made upon the transgression of the first pair, were not very great and extraordinary. That is, there needed not any great alteration in the form of serpents, nor in the woman's make and constitution, nor in the temper of the ground to accomplish what is mentioned as a punishment upon each.

Serpents there were before the fall, as is manifest. And their winding, insinuating motion is referred to. Nor did God now, after the fall, create any new species of plants, as "thorns and thistles," to exercise Adam's patience. There were already formed plants and herbs, that were not immediately useful for food, and would occasion an increase of labour and toil. And doubtless there were also lions, and tigers, and other like creatures: all originally made within the compass of the six day's creation, and all good and wisely designed, as a restraint upon man, according as his temper and circumstances should prove: to humble him, and to render him sensible of his weakness in himself, and his dependence upon God: and to make him thankful for all his distinctions, that he might be induced to give the praise of all his prerogatives and pre-eminences to him from whom they came: who had made him to differ, with advantage, from the rest of the living creatures of this earth: but had also shown, in a proper measure, his wisdom and power in them, as well as in him, and indeed, is wise and holy, great and admirable in all his works.

Nor does it appear that the whole earth though fitted for great fertility, was made paradisaical. For, according to Moses, paradise was a garden, a spot of ground which God planted, a certain district or territory, designed for the accommodation of man, and the living creatures with him, in a state of innocence. When Adam therefore was turned out of paradise, he would find a difference.

It follows at ver. 20. "And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living."

When this was done, is not absolutely certain. Moses does not say when. And as he seems not always to keep the order of time, it may be questioned whether this was done very soon after the sentence had been pronounced upon them; or not till after the woman had brought forth, and was the mother of a living child.

Ver. 21. "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

It is very likely that this is not mentioned in the order of time. For it precedes the account of expelling Adam and Eve out of paradise: whereas it cannot be easily supposed that it was

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done so soon. It must be reckoned probable, that immediately after the transgression of our first parents, and pronouncing sentence upon them, they were driven out of paradise. But coats of skins could not be had till some time after the fall: for as all the brute creatures were made by pairs, some time must have been allowed for their increase, before any could be slain in the way of sacrifice, or otherwise.

Some of the Jewish writers indeed have understood this literally: "that unto Adam and his wife God did make coats of skins and clothed them:" that is, he *created* for them such garments. Then there would be no occasion to take from any of the beasts; but the more likely meaning is, that by Divine instruction and direction they made to themselves coats of skins: and it may be supposed, that they were but rough and unpolished.

Understand these words, as we generally do, that by Divine instruction, and with the Divine approbation, Adam and Eve clothed themselves with the skins of slain beasts, of sheep, or goats, or other living creatures: I should be much inclined to think that Moses inserted this particular, as evidence that God himself approved of clothing the body with proper and sufficient covering, as a ground and foundation of that decency, which is necessary to be observed by so sociable a creature as man, and in his present circumstances. And if the rough skins of beasts were used then, a more agreeable and more ornamental clothing would not be unlawful or sinful hereafter: when farther improvements in arts and sciences should be made by the wit and industry of man: provided it were but suitable to the ability and condition of persons. And, for certain, a great variety of circumstances was very likely to arise in a numerous race of beings.

I say, if this be the meaning of the words, as they are generally understood, I should be much disposed to think, that Moses inserted this particular, to prevent all scruples upon this head: for though a thing be in itself reasonable, and highly expedient; yet there is nothing that so effectually puts objections to silence, as a divine precept or precedent.

However, there is a very learned and diligent expositor of scripture,[a] who explains this text in a different manner. He does not deny, that the original word is used for coat or clothing: but yet he thinks the word rendered coats, signifies tents or tabernacles: which would be more needful than clothing in that warm climate near paradise. Nor would the first pair, he thinks, need there so thick and heavy a clothing as that of the skins of beasts. Nevertheless, I do but just mention this sense: for that of our translation is generally approved of both by Jewish and Christian interpreters.

Ver. 22. "And the Lord God said: Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil."

Calvin's remark upon this verse is exactly to this purpose: 'Whereas,[b] says he, many Chris-'tians from this place draw the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the Deity, I fear the argument 'is not solid.' So that great man. And indeed, though Moses gives no particular account of the creation of angels, yet their existence is supposed in several parts of this history: and what reason could there be for saying, upon this occasion, that man was become like one of the Divine persons? It may therefore be reckoned very likely that here is a reference to the angelical order of beings, supposed to be more perfect and more knowing than man.

Still ver. 22. "And now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and live for ever."

The expression is elliptical. Somewhat is to be supplied, and to this effect. 'Now care 'must be had, that he take not of the tree of life, and live for ever.' This seems to imply, what was formerly hinted, that the tree of life was salutary and healing, and might be useful in case of hurts, and injuries, and decays. But man having transgressed in eating of the fruit forbidden him, and having incurred the threatened sentence; (which too had been pronounced upon him:) it was by no means fit he should eat of the tree of life: the fruit of which might have rendered him immortal, or however prolonged his days to a period that was not suited to the circumstances into which he had brought himself by wilful transgression. There is an allusion to this design, or this virtue of the tree of life in Rev. xxii. 2. "And in the midst of the street of it, and on either side the river was there the tree of life—— And the leaves of the tree were for healing the nations."

Ver. 23, 24. "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the

[a] Vid. J. Cleric. Comm. in Gen. iii. 7, et 21. [b] Quod autem eliciunt ex hoc loco Christiani doctrinam de tribus in Deo personis, vereor ne satis firmum sit argumentum. Comm. in Gen. iii. 22.

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ground, from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man. And he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

The design of all which seems to be to intimate, that the sentence of death, pronounced upon man, was peremptory and irreversible. He was by no means to attain to immortality in this world, but suffer the change of death, or the dissolution of soul and body, and return to the dust, out of which he was taken.

The text speaks expressly of "man" only. But all allow that the "woman" is included, and must be understood. And are we not also to conclude, that the living creatures were all to follow Adam, and leave paradise. There was no need to mention them. They accompanied him who had dominion over them.

Man is sent forth "to till the ground," in doing which he would have more labour than he would have had in paradise. His employment is described by tilling the ground. For that would be his main work, as his diet, for some while at least, would be chiefly vegetable. At the entrance into Eden, by which Adam was driven out, were placed cherubim, or angels, with a bright appearance, more than ordinary, which rendered it awful.

It would be too curious, I apprehend, to inquire what became of that delightful garden, or spot of ground, in which Adam and Eve were first placed by their bountiful Maker. If it subsisted for a while, it may be supposed to have been destroyed by the flood, and possibly before.

I have now surveyed the account of the creation and fall of man. And though I have not made use of the notion of its being allegorical, which usually leaves too much room for fancy, and for a variety of imaginations, many of which, if not all, would be conjectural: yet, possibly, all is not exact history, nor every thing put in order of time.

One instance of this, I think, we have plainly seen in the latter part of this chapter: where God's making coats for Adam and Eve is mentioned before their expulsion from paradise: whereas it is very probable it was after it.

Another thing seems to be transposed in the Mosaic account. The living creatures are represented to be brought to Adam, to see how he would call them, before Eve was made. But it is not easy to conceive how that should be done on the very sixth day of the creation, when Eve was made. It might be rather done some time after it. But Moses places that transaction as he has done, the more to show the importance of the woman's creation, though it might in time succeed it.

And there might be some other things instanced in, which need not to be literally taken, as here related in the utmost strictness of interpretation.

In this account of Moses we have the origin of things. It is what speculative minds, in all ages, and in almost all parts of the world, have been employed about. God is good; but how to account, then, for evil, is a difficulty which has greatly engaged and perplexed mankind.

In this relation of Moses is set before us the origin of moral and penal evil of sin, and diseases, and death, of the uncommon pains of child-bearing women, and of the great pains and labour which man takes for the providing the necessaries of life.

And though, as has been owned, the Mosaic account is not free from difficulties, there never was a better given by any. And consider Moses only as a philosopher, or law-giver separate from the character of an inspired writer, his account of the creation, and of the primitive state of man, and his fall, is worthy of respect. And we have reason to be thankful for it.

I shall now mention some observations in the way of corollary.

I. All things were originally as they came out of the hand of God, good, and were made by him in great wisdom.

After the history of the six days' creation, and of man in particular, it is added by Moses, at the end of the first chapter of this book: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." And Solomon, having with great diligence employed his active and capacious mind in surveying the affairs of this world, and having observed many instances of vanity and vexation therein, and particularly the great degeneracy of mankind, says: "This have I found," of this I see reason to be fully satisfied, "that God made man upright: but they have sought out many inventions," Ecc. vii. 29.

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II. We are here led to observe the dignity of the human nature, which is so set before us, that it might not be overlooked, but might be regarded, and taken notice of by every one.

Gen. i. 26. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Every word shows the dignity of the human nature. God is represented as proceeding to the formation of man with deliberation and consultation. He makes him himself. He does not say: "Let the earth now bring forth man." But, "Let us make man." And still farther: "in our image, after our likeness." His dignity is also signified in what follows. "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth." This thought, of man's having dominion over all things in this earth, and being lord of all the creatures therein, seldom occurs, as I apprehend, in heathen writings, but it is a great and just notion, and is a privilege which man still enjoys in great measure.

This notion of the dignity of the human nature leads us to two reflections: first, man, who has been made so excellent, and has dominion over other creatures, should act according to his dignity, as reasonable, and superior to other creatures on this earth, and should scorn every thing that is mean, base, impure, and cruel.

Another thought, which the dignity of the human nature leads us to, is this: that we can thence argue with great probability, if not with absolute certainty, that God will not lose this creature man, or suffer him to be for ever and totally lost. If man perish and be lost, to what purpose was this earth formed? And of what use are all things therein, if man, to whom dominion over them was given, be taken away? and if he live not to take pleasure in, admire, use, and improve, the rich and costly furniture with which this earth is adorned? It is moreover highly probable, that his time on this earth is not the whole period of his existence. So we may argue from the consideration of the superior dignity of the human nature. And we may see hereafter, that the argument is not inconclusive but rightly framed.

III. All mankind have proceeded from one pair.

Of this we could not be now absolutely sure, without some good authority, or well attested tradition; but it is the account of Moses, the greatest law-giver that ever was, and an inspired prophet of God. The great resemblance of mankind in the several parts of the world might be some ground of this supposition; but it would not be full proof. For many pairs, resembling each other, might have been formed by God, the Creator, at once, in several, and remote countries, that the earth might be soon peopled thereby. But the account of Moses, I suppose, may be relied upon. Nor ought difference of complexion, and some other lesser things, to be reckoned a valid objection: for difference of climates, with the varieties of air, earth, water, and the lesser or greater degrees of the sun's heat, will make sensible alterations and differences in one and the same species. St. Paul observes to the Athenians, that "God had made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth," Acts xvii. 26. And though, as before said, the great resemblance of the human frame and powers in the several parts of the world may not be a demonstrative argument to us, that all came from one pair: yet this account of Moses is much confirmed by the great agreement between the several nations of the earth in bodily frame, and intellectual powers, like desires, and passions, and diseases, and in universal liableness to death.

This leads us to two reflections. One is, the remarkable effect of the Divine blessing, bestowing such fruitfulness, that by one pair the vast circumference of this earth should be gradually peopled, manured, and improved.

The second is, that all men ought to love one another as brethren, for they are all descended from the same parents, and cannot but have like powers, and weaknesses, and wants. Solomon says, Prov. xxvii. 19. "As in water," or any other mirror, "face answers to face, so the heart of man to man." By considering ourselves we may know others: what they want, how we may relieve and comfort them. And this thought should abate exorbitant pride; for, notwithstanding some differences of outward condition, we have all the same nature, and are brethren.

IV. The Mosaic account teaches the only right order of marriage, that is, of one man, and one woman.

When the pharisees came to our Lord with a question about divorce, they being then accustomed to polygamy, and to frequent and easy divorces, he immediately answers them, and puts them to silence, by referring them to the Mosaic account of the creation of the first pair, and the Divine institution of marriage. Careful observations upon the increase of mankind have

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shown us, that the number of males and females born into the world is near equal. Consequently, great inconveniences would ensue from a perversion of the right order of marriage. Nevertheless, nothing can be so effectual, to put and keep things in a right course, as Divine authority, like that in the Mosaic account of the creation.

V. Another thing taught in this account of the origin of things, is the lawfulness, purity, and innocence of the married state.

For God made man male and female, and marriage was instituted in the primitive state of innocence. Chap. i. 27, 28. "And God created man in his own image: in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them: Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." Not now to recite again the farther account of the formation of the woman in the second chapter. Doubtless this account of Moses has been of great service in all ages, to remove or prevent scruples, and to restrain those, who from mistaken notions, or wrong views, have been disposed to prohibit, or to discourage marriage.

But though all are at liberty to marry, if they please, yet our Saviour,[a] as well as St. Paul,[b] seems to intimate the commendableness of the single life in some, if they are masters of their own purpose, and if they prefer it, that they may serve God with less distraction, and greater freedom from the cares of this life: if they choose to deny themselves, and to give themselves wholly up to the service of others in spreading the principles of religion, or promoting the interest of civil society, in any cases of emergency: provided also, that they herein act without ostentation, and do not overvalue themselves on this account, nor at all despise others; then there may be some commendableness in the single life. Nevertheless, after all, it may be reckoned probable, that there are not, and cannot be, many instances of the single life with all the above-mentioned qualifications.

VI. The Mosaic account of the origin of things teaches the duty of the sexes to each other in the married state.

This account teaches this, and is designed so to do. The design is so apparent, that it may possibly, lead some to question, whether there is not some studied contrivance in the narration. And if all is history, and things were so performed in the order here related, it may be esteemed unquestionable, that things were so done, particularly, that God created the man and the woman in this manner, and in this order, on purpose to convey these instructions. So therefore argues St. Paul. 1 Cor. xi. 7, 8, 9. "For the man is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." And in another place, 1 Tim. ii. 12, 13, 14. "But I suffer not a woman to teach, or to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Here he adds also: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

Indeed all nations by their own reason and observation have discerned the same, and have allotted to men the cabinet of princes, the senate, and courts of judicature, as well as the command of navies and armies. But there are two ways of teaching one and the same thing. One is by reason, the other is by facts related in a certain order, and clothed with certain circumstances. And this latter method may be least offensive, and as effectual as the other. For comparisons between equals, or nearly so, are odious and disagreeable. Few or none can bear to insist upon majesty of countenance, bulk and strength of body, compass of knowledge, and solidity of judgment, as grounds of superiority and pre-eminence: when too there may be on the other side advantages of a different kind, that will bring the balance very nigh, if not quite, to an equilibre. The Mosaic narration affords a better, as it is a softer, argument. Ch. ii. 7. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And man became a living soul." Afterwards ver. 18. "And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him an help meet for him." Ver. 21, 22. "And he took one of his ribs—— And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man." All which affords excellent instruction. And if this account teaches yielding of will and desire on the one hand, it does as strongly enforce protection, love and tenderness on the other: the performance of which, suitably, on each side, it is likely, will secure mutual comfort and happiness.

[a] Matt. xix. [b] 1 Cor. vii.

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VII. Man was put upon a fair and equitable trial, and fell from his primitive state of happiness by his own fault.

Ch. ii. 16, 17. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat. For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

Divines of all denominations, I think, are agreed that Adam had freedom of will, power to choose and to refuse. Good and evil were set before him. Nor was it a difficult thing to avoid the prohibited fruit; and yet he was induced to eat of it.

VIII. If Adam, who was made upright, was overcome by temptation, we ought to be upon our guard.

This is a duty inculcated upon all of us by our excellent Lord and Master. Especially ought we to guard against disadvantageous and dishonourable thoughts of the Deity. By this means, as much as any, the subtle serpent prevailed upon and deceived Eve. Ch. iii. 1. "Yea has God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"—— Ver. 5. "For God does know, that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." All dishonourable sentiments of God, as unmerciful, illiberal, rigid, and inexorable, except upon terms of strict justice, are as false as those here suggested by the serpent, or rather by Satan: and if hearkened to, will have a bad influence upon us, and lead us astray from him who is the source of our happiness.

IX. The fall of our first parents is not only an argument to watch ourselves, but also to watch over others. Says St. Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy —— For I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

X. The sentence pronounced by God upon our first parents for their transgression was mild and equitable: or it was a just sentence tempered with mercy.

The whole process of the judgment shows this, as related by Moses. First, Adam is summoned. He could not deny that he had eaten the forbidden fruit: but he has an excuse; not a very good one, yet an excuse it is. "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The woman too had tasted of the forbidden fruit, and had first tasted. She likewise has an excuse and apology; and though not sufficient, yet of some moment. "And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Still farther, God begins with pronouncing sentence upon the serpent, which must have been exceeding comfortable to our first parents. And an intimation is given, that the "seed of the woman" should prevail against the serpent: or, that the cause of truth and innocence, religion and virtue, and the true interest and happiness of man, should prevail and take place in the end.

And though afterwards there are distinct and several sentences pronounced upon each, even upon Adam and Eve; and the sentence of death, as common to both: yet they are not immediately destroyed, but have time afforded for repentance.

We cannot forbear therefore to observe the justice and equity of the Divine Being. Man must die, but not immediately. And he would meet with arguments to establish his resolutions for obedience to the will of God, and for performing the duties of his present condition. The angels that fell appear not to have had any mercy shown them: they, it is likely, had no tempter. Herein, then, there is a difference between man and them. God in his great goodness and equity considers this, and treats man accordingly. This, as well as other things, should induce us to acknowledge the goodness of God, and to guard against all those sentiments that impeach it. God is the fountain of goodness. God therefore is the most merciful and most equitable being in the universe.

XI. The Mosaic account may lead us to think, that some magnify the consequences of the fall of our first parents.

The sin of Adam was the introduction of death, and of the miseries of this life. And so far his sin is imputed to his descendants, that they all become liable to the sentence of natural death. As St. Paul says, Rom. v. 12. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And so death," a sentence of death, "passed upon all men." This is not to be denied; nor is it any impeachment of the Divine justice or goodness. For God might have made man at first mortal, only supposing a future state: and that all things here, comforts and sorrows, be designed and ordered, as preparatory and disciplinary for another and better state.

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But beside this, some assert, that the descendants of Adam derive from him a vitiated and corrupted nature, unable and averse to good, and inclined to evil. But where is this taught, either in this origin of things now before us, or in any other part of scripture? And would not this be, in reality, to make God the author of sin? Is not this imitating guilty Adam, who said: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me, and I did eat." But if men could allege a vitiated nature, it would be a better apology than that of Adam. The bad conduct, and the solicitations of the woman, could be no more at the utmost than a temptation from without. But nature is inborn, and the man himself. If a bad nature be derived to him without his own fault, the evil is past remedy, and quite out of his power. And if bad actions flow from a bad nature, he is scarce accountable for them. They must be put to the account of nature, and the author of it.

Besides, what reason is there to apprehend so great an alteration made in the nature and powers of man by Adam's transgression? Is there an immense difference between Adam and his posterity? Adam was made innocent: but his virtue was not confirmed. How easily were Adam and Eve misled and drawn into transgression! Is it not very strange that, in their circumstances, they should not be satisfied without tasting of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: when the prohibition was so express and strict, and they enjoyed great plenty of other things? The positive law, delivered to Adam, forbidding him to touch the fruit of that one tree, was a proper trial of his virtue. For it cannot be doubted, that he was obliged to respect this law of his Creator; and if he should disobey it, that must be owing to some defect or failure of moral virtue, as before observed.

Let us, then, not be unwilling to consider, whether the consequences of the fall of our first parents be not aggravated by some: and let us be careful not to admit any schemes which are derogatory to God's honour, and which countenance or justify men in their allowed weaknesses, or wilful transgressions.

XII. Finally, from the Mosaic account of the origin of things, and the explication which has been now given of it, we may be enabled to perceive, that the permission of the fall of our first parents, with the consequences of it, is no reflection upon the wisdom of the Divine government.

For rational creatures must be put upon trial. They cannot be without freedom of will, which may be abused. And as our first parents did not sin without a tempter, or of their own motion, as many of the angels seem to have done, God in his treatment of them has joined mercy with justice. Hence will arise glory to God, and good to men. God by his long suffering and patience, and the instructions afforded to them, and other methods of his Providence, the result of his unsearchable wisdom and goodness, will bring many of the sons of Adam to repentance, true holiness, eminent virtue, and heavenly glory and happiness, exceeding what could have been enjoyed on this earth, even in Paradise itself.

The virtue of true penitents is sometimes very great. They gain an establishment in the love and fear of God, and a full resolution for all goodness. The steady virtue of men amidst the temptations of this world will exceed the virtue of Adam in Paradise. It is true they are not innocent as he was; but they are upright, and fully resolved, and they overcome strong temptations: and the moment of their virtue, according to equitable construction, (and such is that of the Divine judgment) may equal, and even surpass the virtue of an angel, who has not so great temptations. I am the more led to this, considering the great recompenses which God in the gospel has proposed to the faithful, the steady and victorious in this state of trial: and if we may attain to such excellence here, and such glory hereafter, we are greatly to blame, and much wanting to ourselves, if we do not "strive against sin," Heb. xii. 4. to the utmost, and resolutely, though humbly, and without ostentation, maintain our integrity amidst all the solicitations of this world.

END OF THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT.

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A

LETTER

TO JONAS HANWAY, ESQ.

IN WHICH SOME REASONS ARE ASSIGNED, WHY HOUSES FOR THE RECEPTION OF PENITENT WOMEN, WHO HAVE BEEN DISORDERLY IN THEIR LIVES, OUGHT NOT TO BE CALLED MAGDALEN HOUSES.

SIR,

YOUR generous concern to promote good designs occasions you this trouble. There is now, and has been for some while, much discourse about erecting a house, or houses, for the reception of penitent women, who have been disorderly in their lives: a design formerly unknown and unheard of among us. It has been proposed by some that they should be called Magdalen Houses. And there is already established a house of this kind in Goodman's-fields, which is called a Magdalen House for penitent prostitutes.

As that denomination is disliked by others beside myself, I have taken the liberty to address you upon this subject.

I presume it may be owing to a supposition, that the fine story, recorded in the seventh chapter of St. Luke's gospel, of the gracious reception which our Lord gave to a woman, there called "a sinner," relates to Mary Magdalene. And you, Sir, if I do not misunderstand you, in your Letter to Robert Dingley, Esq. at p. 22, speak of Mary Magdalene as a harlot.[a]

And that she is the woman, there spoken of, must have been at some times a prevailing opinion. For the summary of part of that chapter, in our English Bibles, is to this purpose. 'Our Lord showeth by occasion of Mary Magdalene, how he is a friend to sinners, not to 'maintain them in sins, but to forgive their sins upon faith and repentance.'[b]

Nevertheless I cannot think that Mary Magdalene is there meant.

One reason here offers from the history itself, at ver. 27, where she is said to be "a woman in the city," in which our Lord then was: which, according to most harmonizers of the gospels, was either Capernaum or Naim: whereas there can be no reason to believe that Mary Magdalene resided at either of those places. Says Mr. James Macknight, Harm. sect. xliii. p. 134. 'Η μαγδαληνη, the Magdalene or Magdalite, probably from Magdala, the place of her nativity, a 'town situated somewhere beside the lake, and mentioned Matt. xv. 29.'

A passage at the beginning of the next chapter of St. Luke's gospel deserves particular attention, which, therefore, shall be here recited. "And it came to pass afterwards, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching, and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom

[a] The words, to which I refer, are these: 'What judg-'ment did the Saviour of the world pass on a harlot? What 'was the case of Mary Magdalene?'

[b] The contents, or summaries, prefixed to the chapters in our Bibles, seem to have been annexed to the English translation now in use, which was made in the time of king James the first. For in all editions of that translation, so far as I have observed, they are the same, where there are any contents at all. But it is not to be supposed that they represent the sense of all learned men in general. For in an English Bible in the quarto form, printed in the reign of queen Elizabeth in 1599, by the deputies of Christopher Barker, the summary of that paragraph in Luke vii. is this: 'The sinful woman washeth Jesus' feet.' In Pool's English Annotations it is this: 'Eating at Simon's house, a woman washeth his feet with tears,' &c. And in Dr. Clarke's Paraphrase, the same paragraph is briefly expressed in this manner: 'Jesus shows by the similitude of a forgiven debtor, that re-'penting sinners often exceed other men in zeal and piety.' I might refer to others; but these instances are sufficient to show, that not a few learned men have declined naming the woman there spoken of, and that they have not been satisfied she was the same with Mary Magdalene.

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of God. And the twelve were with him, and certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits, and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna, wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susannah, and many others. Which ministered to him of their substance, ch. viii. 1, 2, 3.

This text affords divers reasons for thinking, that Mary Magdalene is not the woman intended in the preceding chapter.

In the first place, it hence appears, that Mary Magdalene was a woman of quality. But it is very uncommon for such to deserve the character given, ch. vii. 37, "a woman in the city which was a sinner." And the pharisee, at whose house our Lord was then entertained, "spake within himself, saying: This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him. For she is a sinner."

Mr. Macknight, again, argues to the like purpose, p. 134. 'Mary Magdalene seems rather 'to have been a woman of high station and opulent fortune, being mentioned by St. Luke even 'before Joanna, the wife of so great a man as Herod's steward. Besides, the other evangelists, 'when they have occasion to speak of our Lord's female friends, commonly assign the first place 'to Mary Magdalene.' As Matt. xxvii. 56, 61. xxviii. 1. Mark xv. 40, 47. And see Luke xxiv. 10. But John xix. 25. affords an exception.

Grotius, in his Annotations upon Matt. xxviii. 1. speaks to the like purpose.[a] He likewise thinks, it was at her expence, chiefly, that the spices were prepared for embalming the body of Jesus.

To which I would add, that the precedence, just taken notice of, may have been, partly, owing to her age.

Secondly, In the text, which we are now considering, Mary Magdalene is mentioned with other women, "who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities." And of her is said, "out of whom went seven devils." Which is also observed by another evangelist, Mark xvi. 9. She therefore was one of those, who are sometimes called dæmoniacs, and had been possessed, as we generally say, by evil spirits.[b]

Accordingly, Dr. Lardner, in his case of the dæmoniacs, mentioned in the New Testament, has several times taken notice of Mary Magdalene. He says: 'What was Mary's case, 'appears in general by St. Luke's account. ch. viii. 1, 2——Here Mary is reckoned among 'those, whom our Lord had healed of infirmities, and such infirmities, as were ascribed to evil 'spirits.'

'But I do not think, we can with certainty conclude from those words, what was her par-'ticular affliction, because the Jews in those times imputed a great variety of distempers to the 'influence of dæmons. But though we dare not say positively, what was her case, whether a 'distempered frame of mind, or epilepsy, or somewhat else: it appears to me very evident, that 'some natural, not moral distemper, is hereby intended, and that by seven dæmons is meant 'many: a certain number being put for an uncertain. It was supposed, as in the case of the 'man, who called himself legion, that more than one dæmon, or unclean spirit, was concerned 'in inflicting, or aggravating the infirmity, which she had been afflicted with, and which our 'blessed Lord graciously removed.'

Thirdly, In this text Mary Magdalene is mentioned with divers other honourable women, who attended our Lord in his journies, and ministered to him of their substance.[c]

But it may be justly questioned, whether our Lord would have allowed of that, if Mary's conduct had been unreputable in the former part of her life. For though he received such an one as a penitent, and assured her of the forgiveness of her sins; it would not be easily reconciled with the rules of prudence to admit such a person to a stated attendance.

This argument has affected the minds of many learned men.[d]

[a] 'Maria Magdalene.'] Quam, ut ducem agminis, Matthæus nominat. Et credo ab eâ factos præcipue sumptus. Sane cæteris nobilior fuisse videtur, quia nomen ejus aliis præponi solet. Grot. in Matt. xxviii. 1.

[b] Dr. Clarke's Paraphrase of Luke viii. 2, is thus: 'particularly, Mary Magdalene, whom he had miraculously delivered from evil spirits, that had possessed her.'

[c] Of that attendance Grotius speaks in this manner. More Judaïco, ut recte notat Hieronymus, mulieres, viduæ præsertim, solebant magistris necessaria suppeditare. Quod secuti sunt Apostoli inter Judæos, Paulus inter Gentes omisit, ne sinisterioris sermonis ansam præberet. Maluit autem Christus admittere hoc beneficium, quam cum Apostolorum comitatu gravis esse ignotis, ad quos adventabat. Grot. ad Luc. viii. 1.

[d] Sed et de vitâ Magdalenæ ante actâ nihil plane constat,

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Nor can it be imagined, that any women of distinction and good credit would admit into their company one who had been under the reproach of a disorderly life. By St. Luke they are here enumerated after this manner. "Mary called Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others." In St. Matthew xxvii. 55, 56. "And many women were there, beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children." Compare Mark xv. 40, 47. xvi. 1. Luke xxiv. 10. John xix. 25. All these must have been women of an unblemished character. And so far was there from being any exception to Mary Magdalene, that she is several times mentioned as the most honourable, and placed first of all.

Among them, whether she be expressly named or not, was our Lord's mother. And undoubtedly an exact decorum was observed, according to the Jewish custom.

Nor were they idle.[a] As Jerom says, they provided for our Lord's accommodation in his food and garments.[b] And, possibly, Mary Magdalene presided in the direction of the affairs which were under their care.[c]

When they accompanied our Lord in any of his journies, they may have followed at a distance, and in a separate band. And, as may be well supposed, they had some female servants of their own.

The woman called "a sinner," was absolutely excluded from having any part in that company. When she came into the room where our Lord was, and gave proofs of repentance, he graciously and openly received her as a penitent. Having delivered the similitude of two forgiven debtors, he addressed the pharisee, at whose house he was, in these words: "Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven," Luke vii. 47. Afterwards, at ver. 48. "And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven." Finally, at ver. 50. "And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace." Nor could any unprejudiced men disallow our Lord's ability to discern her real temper, and to pronounce a right sentence, after he had shown to the pharisee himself, that he knew his inmost thoughts.

In all this our our blessed Lord acted agreeably to his great design, which was to bring sinful men to repentance. And he faithfully discharged the important commission that had been given him, which was "to seek, and to save that which was lost," Matt. xviii. 11. Luke xix. 10.

But it cannot be reasonably supposed, that he would admit such a person into the number of his stated attendants. And I believe, that they who attentively observe our Lord's history, as recorded in the gospels, may perceive his life to have been an example of admirable wisdom and prudence, as well as of the strictest virtue, and the most generous goodness and compassion.

Let us now sum up the evidence, so far as we have gone. Mary of Magdala was a woman of distinction, and very easy in her worldly circumstances. For a while she had laboured under some bodily indisposition, which our Lord miraculously healed. For which benefit she was ever after very thankful. So far as we know, her conduct was always regular, and free from censure. And we may reasonably believe, that after her acquaintance with our Saviour it was edifying and exemplary. I conceive of her, as a woman of a fine understanding, and known virtue and discretion, with a dignity of behaviour becoming her age, her wisdom, and her high station. By all which she was a credit to him, whom she followed as her Master and benefactor. She showed our Lord great respect in his life, at his death, and after it. And she was one of those, to whom he first showed himself after his resurrection. As appears from Matt. xxviii. 1—10. Mark xvi. 9. and John xx. 1—18.

I am very unwilling to trouble you with the intricacies of criticism. But I fear, my argument will not be reckoned conclusive by all, unless I proceed a little farther, and take notice of

nisi quod abludere a majestate Domini videatur, quod in comitatu suo mulierem ob impuritates suas infamem voluerit circumducere—— Neque consulit huic difficultati Nat. Alexander, quoad ansa omni scandalo per illustrem atque inter Judæos notam pœnitentiam præcisa fuerit. Nimis enim efferata erat Judæorum malitia, quam ut eapropter a conviciis cessaturi essent. Lampe in Joann. Evang. cap. xix. T. III. p. 608. Vid. et Basnag. Ann. 31. num. xlii.

[a] —— secutæ sunt Jesum non otiosæ, sed facientes quæ mandabantur ab eo, et delectabant eum. Ministrantes enim sequebantur eum. Orig. in Matt. Item. 35. num. 141. p. 929. T. III. ed. Bened.

[b] Consuetudinis Judaïcæ fuit, nec ducebatur in culpam, more gentis antiquo, ut mulieres de substantiâ suâ victum atque vestitum præceptoribus ministrarent, &c. Hieron. in Matt. xxvii. tom. IV. p. 140. Bened.

[c] Ὁυτω και αυτη αρχηγος των μαθητριων γενομενη. κ. λ. Modest. ap. Phot. Cod. 275. p. 1526.

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some other things. For by some it has been supposed, that Mary, sister of Lazarus, was the same as Mary Magdalene. And by some it has been thought, that Mary, sister of Lazarus, is the same as the woman called "a sinner."

First, Some have supposed, that Mary sister of Martha and Lazarus, was the same as Mary Magdalene. This is an assertion of Baronius,[a] who was confuted by Isaac Casaubon,[b] G. J. Vossius,[c] and others. Grotius[d] likewise has well argued against that opinion.

Indeed I think it very manifest, that they are different persons. For 1. Mary Magdalene was so called from a place situated in Galilee. Lazarus and his sisters were inhabitants of Bethany near Jerusalem in Judea, properly so called. John xi. 1, and elsewhere. 2. Mary Magdalene is frequently named with other women, who attended our Lord in his journies, and came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, at the times of the great feasts as we have seen. But Lazarus and his sisters resided at Bethany. Nor do we read of any attendance, which either of those sisters gave our Lord, except at the place of their ordinary residence. St. Luke has recorded a visit, which our Lord made there, not improbably, as he was going up to the feast of the dedication, mentioned John x. 22. "And it came to pass," says St. Luke, "as they went, that he entered into a certain village. And a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister named Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word." And what there follows: Luke x. 38, 39. And St. John, ch. xi. giving an account of the sickness, and death, and resurrection of Lazarus, assures us, that both his sisters were at home at Bethany. Here likewise it was, that Mary anointed our Lord with precious ointment a short time before his last sufferings, as related John xii. at the beginning. 3. Mary Magdalene is particularly mentioned with others, whom our Lord had miraculously healed of infirmities: and out of her, as is said, went seven dæmons. But nothing of this kind is ever said, or hinted of Mary sister of Lazarus.

Secondly, Some have supposed, Mary sister of Martha and Lazarus, to be the same with the woman called "a sinner," of whom St. Luke speaks in ch. vii.

For St. John writes, ch. xi. 1, 2. "Now a certain man was sick named Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, whose brother Lazarus was sick."

Here therefore we must again recollect what St. Luke says, ch. vii. 37, 38. "And behold, a woman in the city which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping. And she began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment."

Hence, then, it may be argued, that St. John has told us the name of the woman that was "a sinner," though St. Luke omitted it. She is Mary sister of Lazarus.

To which I would answer. 1. Mary, sister of Lazarus, was a woman of good character, without any note of infamy. St. Chrysostom, in a homily upon the beginning of the eleventh chapter of St. John's gospel, says: 'Some have put the question, whether this be the same with 'her that is called "a sinner." But without reason, he says, for 'this was a virtuous woman of 'good credit.' And in a homily upon Matt. xxvi. 6, &c. he calls the sister of Lazarus, 'an[f] admirable woman.' 2. The anointing, mentioned by St. Luke, was done at Naim or Capernaum, or some other place in Galilee. But Mary, sister of Lazarus, as was before shown, dwelt at Bethany. 3. St. John here intends that anointing of our Lord, of which himself has given a particular relation in ch. xii. 1—8. Which therefore we must now observe. "Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead. There they made him a supper, and Martha served. But Lazarus was one of them that sat at table. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus,

[a] In primis dicimus, attestatione Joannis Evangelistæ, immo Christi, apertissime constare, unam eamdemque personam fuisse Mariam Lazari et Marthæ sororem cum Maria Magdalena. Baron. Ann. 32. num. xix.

[b] Exercit. Antibar. xix. num. xi.

[c] Longius vero a januâ, quod dicitur, videntur mihi aberrâsse, qui arbitrantur, Mariam, a quâ Dominus, priusquam pateretur, inunctus fuit, Mariam fuisse Magdalenam—— Hæc enim non eâ notâ ab aliis distinguitur Mariis, quod inunxerit Dominum, sed quod Dominus ex eâ septem ejecerit dæmonia. G. J. Voss. Harm. Ev. l. 1. c. 3. § vii.

[d] Vid. Grot. in Matt. xxvi. 6.

[e] Αυτη δε και σεμνη και σπουδαια. In Joan. hom. 62 al. 61. T. VIII. p. 368.

[f] Αλλ' ἑτερα τις θαυμαση, ἡ τα Λαζαρυ αδελφη. In Matt. hom. 80. al. 81. T. VII. p. 765.

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and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him: Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?—— Then said Jesus: Let her alone: against the day of my burying has she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you: but me ye have not always."

That this is a different anointing from that mentioned by St. Luke, is manifest from divers particulars. They differ in the circumstances of time and place as just shown. Again, in the former it was Simon the pharisee, who took offence at our Lord's suffering himself to be touched by a woman that was a sinner. Here it is Judas, one of the disciples, who murmurs at the expence. And our Lord's vindications are quite different. To which might be added, that the woman, of whom St. Luke writes, stood behind our Lord "weeping, and washing his feet with tears." But[a] St. John has not a word of Mary's shedding any tears, though he has twice said, that "she wiped his feet with her hair." See ch. xi. 2, and xii. 3.

In Matt. xxvi. 6—13, and Mark xiv. 3—9, as is well known, is an account of our Saviour's being anointed by a certain woman a short time before the passover. Some[b] learned interpreters think, that these are different histories, and that our Lord was twice anointed in Bethany, in the space of a few days: once by Mary sister of Lazarus, as related by St. John, and a second time by another woman not named, as related by those two evangelists. Others[c] think, that these three evangelists speak of one and the same anointing. Which to me appears very right. But it is not needful, that I should now stay to reconcile those accounts.

I have aimed to show, that Mary Magdalene is not the woman called "a sinner," of whom St. Luke writes, ch. vii. And I suppose, that most Protestant divines are of the same opinion. The learned Romanists have been divided. The grounds and reasons of the controversy among them may be seen in several.[d]

Nevertheless the learned Benedictine editor of St. Chrysostom's works has expressed himself very freely concerning this point, in a note upon one of the homilies above cited. 'It is a 'difficult question,' says he, 'whether the woman that was a sinner, who washed Christ's feet, 'be the same as Mary, sister of Lazarus. But that Mary Magdalene is different from them, is 'now denied by very few.'[e]

Tillemont begins his article of Mary Magdalene with these words: 'It is an ancient question 'in the church, and upon which all are not yet entirely agreed, whether Mary Magdalene be 'the same as Mary sister of Lazarus, and the woman that is said to be a sinner, or whether they 'are three different persons. The most illustrious churches of France, and almost all the 'learned men of our times, have declared for the distinction of these three persons. And it 'has been proved by reasons, which seem fully to decide the difficulty, if we will judge without 'prejudice.'

Du Pin, referring to Luke vii. says: 'It[f] is commonly thought, that this woman was Mary 'Magdalene. Nevertheless the evangelist, who relates this history, does not name her. All he 'says, is, that she was a woman in that city, known for her disorderly life. It is not at all probable, 'that she was Mary Magdalene, or Mary sister of Lazarus, who were women of quality, and good 'condition.'

After this long argument, and so many good authorities, I may leave you to consider, whether

[a] Et quæ secundum Lucam est, plorat, et multum lacrymat, ut pedes Jesu lacrymis lavet. Quæ autem secundum Joannem est Maria, neque peccatrix, neque lacrymans introducitur. Orig. in Matt. hom. 35. num. 77. p. 892. Vid. et Hieron. in Matt. xxvi. 7. T. IV. p. 125.

[b] Cleric. Harm. Evang. cap. lii. p. 350. 351. et cap. lix. p. 404, 405. See also Mr. Macknight's Harm. §. 109. p. 97, 98. and §. 124. p. 146.

[c] G. J. Voss. Harm. Ev. l. i. cap. 3. §. 7. Calvin in Joan. Ev. xii. 1. Lampe Comm. in Jo. T. II. p. 822. Bynæus de Morte Christi. l. i. cap. 3. num. v. &c. Lenfant sur Matt. xxvi. 6. et Jean. xii. 2, 3. Doddridge's Family Expositor. vol. II. p. 283. note (a). Hammond upon Luke vii. 37. Vid. et Hieron. in Matt. xxvi. T. IV. p. 125. fin.

[d] See in Bayle's Dictionary J. Fevre, d'Etaples, or Faber Stapulensis, particularly Note (E). They who have leisure might also consult Tillemont's chapter of S. Marie Madelaine, Mem. Tom. II. and the Notes upon it, which are long, and contain a great deal of learning, relating to this subject.

[e] Grandis quæstio, utrum peccatrix illa, que Christi pedes abluit, eadem ipsa sit, quæ soror Lazari; quam tractare præsentis non est instituti. Mariam autem Magdalenam ab his diversam esse, pauci jam negant. Ap. Chryst. T. VII. p. 765.

[f] On croit communément, que cette femme étoit Marie Madelaine. Cependant l' Evangeliste S. Luc, qui rapporte cette histoire, ne la nomme point. C' étoit une femme connue dans la ville pour une femme de mauvaise vie. Il n' y a pas d' apparence, que ce fût ni Marie Madeleine, ni Marie Sœur de Lazare, dont nous parlerons, qui étoient des femmes de qualité, et de bonne condition. Du Pin Histoire de l' Eglise en Abrégé. Vol. i. p. 451.

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they have not some good reason for their judgment, who dislike the denomination or inscription, taken notice of at the beginning of this letter. 'A Magdalen house for penitent pr——tes.'

It appears to me a great abuse of the name of a truly honourable, and I think truly excellent woman. If Mary's shame had been manifest, and upon record, she could not have been worse stigmatized: whereas the disadvantageous opinion concerning the former part of her life is founded only in an uncertain and conjectural deduction. And if the notion, that she was the woman in Luke vii. be no more than a vulgar error, it ought to be abandoned by wise men, and not propagated, and perpetuated.[a]

Besides, are there no bad consequences of a moral kind to be apprehended from this mistaken, or at best very doubtful opinion? Some, perhaps many, will be admitted into these houses, who have lived very dissolute lives, and have been very abandoned creatures. And the proofs of the repentance of some may be very ambiguous. Nevertheless all who get into houses, called Magdalen houses, will reckon themselves Magdalens. If they have been first taught to impute to her their own vices, they will soon learn to ascribe to themselves her virtues, whether with reason or without. At the lowest, they will be encouraged to magnify themselves beyond what might be wished; where humility, as we may think, should be one requisite qualification. And indeed I imagine, it would be best, that these houses should not have the denomination of any saint at all.

It is not my intention to disparage your institution. I hope that many of your patients may be recovered to wisdom and virtue: though I cannot see the reason why they should be called Magdalens.

It may not be proper for me to recommend another inscription: but I apprehend that a variety might be thought of, all of them decent and inoffensive. I shall propose one, which is very plain: 'A charity house for penitent women:' which, I think, sufficiently indicates their fault; and yet is, at the same time, expressive of tenderness, by avoiding a word of offensive sound and meaning, denoting the lowest disgrace that human nature can fall into, and which few modest men and women can think of without pain and uneasiness. Or, if that title is not reckoned distinct and particular enough, with a small alteration, it may be made, 'for penitent harlots.'

Perhaps you will say, that this letter has been brought to you too late; and I could now almost wish you had had it sooner, provided it contains any thing deserving your regard: for these thoughts, or most of them did early arise in my mind upon the first intelligence concerning this new design; but I declined the labour of putting them together. And I was also in hopes, that the point would be considered by some pious clergyman, or other learned man, apprehensive of consequences, and concerned for the honour of our Saviour, and his friends, as well as desirous to promote the good of his neighbours, and other fellow-creatures of his own time.

Your humble Servant,

October 2, 1758.

A. B.

END OF THE LETTER TO HANWAY.

[a] Since writing what is above, and indeed the whole of this Letter, I have met with a book, entitled Thoughts on the Plan for a Magdalen House for Repentant Prostitutes, addressed to the promoters of this charity. Where, at p. 23, is this paragraph. 'Give me leave to take notice of the name 'of your charity. It does not appear to me, that Mary 'Magdalene was deficient in point of chastity, as is vulgarly 'understood. I rather imagine she was not. It is certain, 'she was a lady of distinction, and of a great and noble mind. 'Her gratitude for the miraculous cure performed upon her 'was so remarkable, that her story is related with the greatest 'honour. And she will ever stand fair in the records of fame. 'Your charity requires a zeal like hers. You are her disciples. And the dedication of your institution to her memory 'is entirely consistent with the honour due to her character. 'And in this light no name more proper could be given to it.' Any one may be sensible, that the justice done to Mary Magdalene in the former part of this paragraph, is very pleasing to me. But I do not perceive, how the title, pleaded for, can be consistent with the honour due to her character. For it carries in it an implication, that she once laboured under the like bad habits with the women placed under the roof of the houses dedicated to her; which houses, with this title, will uphold the popular opinion against the best arguments. And Mary Magdalene, rather than any other, must still be the patroness of penitents, because she is supposed to have been for some while a great sinner. An understanding man, like the author of these thoughts, may now and then declare in conversation, and in writing, that Mary Magdalene was not deficient in point of chastity: but to little or no purpose. These houses, so named, will be new monuments erected, in a protestant country, to the dishonour of a virtuous woman, added to all others of the like kind, which there are already in popish countries; in which, especially some of them, ignorance and superstition prevail to a great degree. And may they never so prevail, and be so general among us!

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A

LETTER

TO THE AUTHORS OF THE LIBRARY, &c.*

GENTLEMEN,

I HOPE you will find room in your Magazine for some critical observations upon the Scriptures. I send you the following, which you are at liberty to make such use of as you please.

2 Cor. v. 14. "For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." I think it should be rendered, "then should all die."

That this is the sense, appears from the connection in the next verse: I therefore shall briefly paraphrase both the verses.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us, we judging this, that if," or, forasmuch as, "one died for all:" then without all doubt, "all should die," to sin, and the world: "and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves," seeking only their own gratification, but rather should live to him, to the glory, and according to the will and the commandments of him, "who died for them, and rose again."

This interpretation is much confirmed by divers other texts, which may be reckoned parallel, particularly Rom. vi. 1, 11. xiv. 7, 8. 1 Pet. iv. 2.

Isaiah lxiii. 1—6. "Who is this, that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?"

The proper and primary meaning of this passage of scripture, seems to be to this purpose. The prophet in a vision, or ecstasy, foresees some great deliverance of the Jewish nation from their enemies, particularly the Edomites; and, being fully persuaded of the event, he addresseth the deliverer, as if seeing him coming from the defeat of the enemy. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" the capital city of the Edomites: "this, that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" Approaching toward me, like a mighty and glorious conqueror in triumph? "I, that speak in righteousness." It is I, whom you have seen in vision, who speak the truth, and am concerned for true religion: "mighty to save," who labour for the welfare of my people, and expose myself to the greatest dangers for their safety. "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?" Tell me, then, says the prophet, whence this redness of blood upon thine apparel, so that thy garments look like those of one that treadeth in the wine-fat? The deliverer answers: "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me:" I have performed this difficult work almost alone, few of my own people joining with me, and without the concurring assistance of neighbouring nations, our allies around us. "For I will tread them," or, for I have trodden them "in my anger; and I will trample," or I have trampled "them in my fury; and their blood shall be," or has been "sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain," or have stained "all my raiment. For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the day of my redeemed," or, of redeeming my people, "was come. And I looked, and there was none to help." I looked round, and well considered the matter: but none of our neighbours were willing to help us, nor were many of my own people ready to join with me, "and I wondered, that there was none to uphold;" this appeared to me very strange, and even astonishing: nevertheless I was not discouraged: "therefore my own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury," or zeal for religion, and for the welfare of my people, "it upheld me," and carried me through all the dangers and difficulties of this arduous service. You see the reason therefore, and you need not wonder at it, that I "am red in my apparel, and that my garments are like him that treadeth in the wine-fat.

* First published in the LIBRARY (a periodical Work printed in 1761 and 1762), for May 1761.

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That appears to be the most proper and critical, or at least the primary sense of this text; however, by some, it is also applied to Christ, and the church. They say, the reason of mentioning Edom is, that it is usual for the prophets to denote the enemies of the church in general, by the name of some country, or people, which has been remarkable for its hatred of the Jewish nation; and that here the prophet seems to take a hint from some remarkable calamity, that had befallen the Edomites, to describe some more general judgment, that should be inflicted upon the enemies of God's church and people.

Be it so: still this passage of scripture has no relation to the sufferings of Christ, but to some deliverance of God's people in ancient or later times, out of the hands of their unrighteous enemies and oppressors.

And we may perceive, that these words in ver. 5. "I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered, that there was none to uphold, therefore my own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury, it upheld me;" do not point to Christ's transactions on this earth. These words may be allusively applied to that great salvation, which is the work of God and Christ alone, but no otherwise: and allusions, even where no more is intended, are dangerous: for texts, often alleged in the way of allusion, and separate from the connection, are apt to gain a sense in our minds, which is not the true meaning of them.

Your readers, if they think fit, may compare this with the same paragraph of the prophet Isaiah, as versified in the Protestant Magazine for April, p. 40.

TO THE INGENIOUS AUTHOR OF THE

REMARKS

UPON 1 COR. xv. 32, IN THE LAST MAGAZINE, p. 315.[a]

SIR,

You have touched upon a difficult text: permit me also to propose some observations upon it. You think it probable, 'that the scene of danger here referred to, is that mentioned Acts xix. 30, 31.' But I rather think, that the first epistle to the Corinthians was written and sent away, before the tumult caused by Demetrius. St. Luke there informs us, ver. 22. "So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministred unto him, Timothy and Erastus. But he himself stayed in Asia for a season." Then at ver. 22. "And the same time there arose no small stir about that way," &c. Says Lightfoot, vol. I. p. 299. 'Between ver. 22 and 23, of this nineteenth 'chapter of the Acts, falleth in the time of St. Paul's writing the first epistle to the Corinthians:' which I take to be very right. You have Dr. Ward with you, at p. 200, where he says: 'It is 'most reasonable, therefore, to understand the expression as metaphorical, and that he refers to 'the tumult raised by Demetrius.' But turn over the leaf, and look to p. 199, there you may see him saying, 'After the affair of Demetrius, he immediately left the city, and went into Macedonia.' This decides the point. The epistle was written before the tumult, not after it; and therefore cannot refer to it.

I understand the expression, "fighting with beasts," literally: I do not love to depart from the proper meaning of a word, unless there be a necessity for so doing.

Nevertheless I do not suppose that St. Paul ever fought with beasts. St. Luke is entirely silent about it; nor is it mentioned by himself in the catalogue of his dangers and sufferings, 2 Cor. xi. 23—33. 'Moreover,' as Dr. Ward well observes, 'had St. Paul been thus engaged, it is difficult to apprehend how he could have escaped, without a miracle.'

To proceed. I am of opinion that St. Paul refers not here to any particular event, or occurrence of his life: it is only a supposition made, an affecting case put by him, to enforce his arguments in behalf of a resurrection, and a life to come.

[a] First published in the LIBRARY for October 1761.

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Let us observe the context. Ver. 19. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable." Ver. 20. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." Ver. 30. "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" Ver. 31. "I protest by our rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. 'I exert myself to the utmost, and am continually exposed to the greatest dangers: all which I 'acquiesce in, and even am joyful; hoping for a resurrection, and to be for ever with Christ. 'Without that expectation, all such laborious and hazardous services would be unreasonable, and 'unprofitable." Ver. 32. 'If, according to a cruel custom which obtains among men, I had, 'for the sake of the gospel, been condemned in this city to fight with beasts, and had been 'miserably torn to pieces, and destroyed by them: would it have been of any advantage to me? 'None at all. All such fortitude and alacrity in serving the interests of religion, and with a 'view to promote the general good of men, would have been quite lost, and fruitless. "If the 'dead rise not," if there be no life after this, we might be disposed to adopt that profane saying, '"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But, my brethren, far be it that any of us 'should embrace such sentiments, or act upon them, ver. 33, "be not deceived," &c.'

I allow of your pointing. My version is little different from yours, and agrees also with that of Dr. Gerdes, professor of divinity at Groningen, who has lately published a critical commentary upon this whole chapter. It is thus: 'Quod si secundum hominem etiam cum bestiis 'decertassem Ephesi, quid inde ad me lucri? Si mortui non resurgent, edamus & bibamus. Cras 'enim moriemur.' A.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE TRUTH OF THE

HISTORY OF THE SEVEN BROTHERS,

SAID TO HAVE SUFFERED MARTYRDOM IN THE TIME OF

ANTIOCHUS EPIPHANES, 2 Macc. vii.[a]

I. THE truth of this history depends entirely upon the second book of the Maccabees. Dr. Prideaux has given a large and judicious account of both those books. Conn. year before Christ 166, p. 185, &c. 'The first,' he says, 'which is a very accurate and excellent history, and 'comes the nearest to the style and manner of the sacred historical writings of any extant, was 'written originally in the Chaldee language, of the Jerusalem dialect, which was the language 'spoken in Judea from the return of the Jews thither from the Babylonish captivity.' The second book of the Maccabees, he says, was written by an Egyptian Jew, probably of Alexandria. But he says, 'it does by no means equal the accurateness and excellence of the first.' And he observes, 'that it consists of several pieces compiled together, by what author is 'uncertain. It begins with two epistles sent from the Jews of Jerusalem, to the Jews of Alex-'andria and Egypt. Both these epistles seem to be spurious, wherever the compiler of this 'book picked them up.'

After these two epistles, which end at the eighteenth verse of the second chapter, the author proposes to write of things, 'as declared by Jason of Cyrene, in five books which he will assay to abridge in one volume.' 'But,' says Du Pin, 'the author of this abridgment does not make 'an exact abridgment of Jason. Sometimes he copies, sometimes he abridges, and oftentimes 'he passes from one narration to another, and does not relate facts in their true order.'

II. The sufferings of these seven brothers, and likewise of Eleazar, related in the sixth chapter of this second book of Maccabees, and said to be "one of the principal scribes, and fourscore years old and ten, are entirely omitted in the first book of the Maccabees: though

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the author of it there writes of the Jewish affairs, and their sufferings in the time of Antiochus. It appears to be probable, that he would not have omitted the sufferings of these persons, if he had been acquainted with them. But so far from relating them particularly, he does not give any the least hint of them.

III. There is not any notice taken of this Eleazar, or these seven brethren, or their mother, by Josephus, in any of his authentic writings. He had twice a fair occasion to mention them: first in his History of the Jewish War, written not many years after the destruction of Jerusalem, in the first book of which he relates the encroachments of Antiochus Epiphanes: and secondly in his Antiquities, written many years afterwards, where he again recounts the sufferings of the Jewish people under the same prince, Ant. L. xii. cap. v. But in neither of those works has he said any thing of Eleazar, or these seven brothers; whose story is so remarkable, that it could not have been omitted by him, if it had been matter of fact.

It is true, there is a work, sometimes ascribed to Josephus, entitled, 'Of the Empire of Reason, or a Discourse of the Maccabees.' But, as Cave says, it is denied to be his by many learned men. 'Josephi tamen esse negant ex eruditis quam plurimi.' And the late Mr. Whiston, who translated into English all the genuine writings of Josephus, omitted this, and would not join it with the rest. And in an advertisement at the end of his version, he says, 'I have omitted what is in the other editions of Josephus: I mean the discourse about the 'Maccabees, that is, about the torments of the mother, and her seven children, under Antiochus 'Epiphanes. It is commended by Eusebius, and Jerom themselves, as an elegant performance, 'and as the genuine work of Josephus. It seems to me not to deserve that character. Nor can 'it, I think, with the least probability be ascribed to Josephus, unless as a declamation, when he 'was a school-boy.' And he observes, that the history is taken from the second book of the Maccabees, 'which it evidently appears Josephus never made use of in his other writings.' So Mr. Whiston. To me it appears to be the work of some Christian.

IV. This account is defective in what we generally call internal characters of credibility.

1. The thing is in itself very extraordinary: that so many persons, of one and the same family, should be all at one and the same time called out to suffer, and be all steady and valiant. It is very improbable, and almost incredible.

2. The whole story has the appearance of a contrived fiction. First there is an account of Eleazar, who suffers at the age of fourscore years and ten, 'that he might leave a notable example to such as are young, to die willingly and courageously for the honourable and holy laws.' Then follow the sufferings and death of these young men, who too are exactly seven, a number much respected among the Jews.

3. The sufferers are not described so particularly as they ought to be, and generally are, in credible relations. The names of the seven brothers are all omitted. Nor is it said, what was their tribe, or family, or what was the usual place of their abode. Nor are we told, who was their father. In some modern accounts the fore-mentioned Eleazar may be said to be their father. But there is no ground for it in this narrative. Nor are we told the name of the mother of these brothers, though she is so often mentioned. Nor is it said, how she died. All that is said, is this: "Last of all, after the sons, the mother died." In the discourse of the Maccabees, ascribed to Josephus, it is said, "the mother, that no man might touch her body, threw herself upon the pile." Και ινα μη ψαυσειε τϐ σωματος αυτης εαυτην εῤῥιψε κατα της τυρας. chap. 17. Upon which the note of Cambesis might be seen. This is one of those passages, which makes me think, that work to have been composed by a Christian. Josippon, or Josephus Ben Gorion, a Jewish writer of the ninth or tenth century, or later, says, that after she had offered up her prayer to God, her spirit departed from her, and she fell upon the heaps of her sons' dead bodies, and lay upon the earth. But these things are additional to the original account. 'Postquam desiit ita orare, & effundere orationem coram Jehova, egressa est anima ejus, dum adhut loqueretur, & exiit spiritus ejus, & corruit super acervos corporum filiorum ejus & jacuit etiam cum eis projecta super terram, p. 115, Oxon. 1706.'

4. These seven brothers are here represented to have been examined, tortured, and slain, one after another, in the presence of the king, or Antiochus. Which is very improbable. For such examinations and executions are generally delegated to officers. And in the first book of the Maccabees, upon which we can depend, we are assured, that Antiochus had officers for this purpose in the several parts of Judea. So 1 Macc. i. 51. "In the self-same manner wrote he

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to his whole kingdom, and appointed overseers over all the people, commanding the cities of Judah to sacrifice, city by city." And afterwards it is particularly said, 1 Macc. ii. 25, "that Mattathias slew the king's commissioner at Modin, who compelled men to sacrifice."

5. It is not said, or hinted, where these persons suffered. Here is a very extraordinary transaction, seven men, all brothers, the sons of one mother, tried, tortured, put to death, one after another, in the presence of a great king. But where, is not said, whether at Jerusalem, or in some other city of Judea. As it is not said, where all this happened, we may not unreasonably infer, it never happened, or was done any where.

For these reasons this history appears so much like a fiction, that I do not see, how it can be relied upon as true. Many acts of Christian martyrs, which had been received for a while, have since been examined by learned men, and rejected, some as spurious, others as very much interpolated: why then should we be afraid to examine a like narrative in a Jewish apocryphal book, of little credit?

Obj. It will be said: does not the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews refer to this history, and thereby assure us of the truth of it? Heb. xi. 35. "And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." To which I answer. It is not clear, or certain, that there is a reference to this history in that text. And I shall add a part of what Mr. Hallett says upon this place, in his paraphrase and notes upon the three last chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews. 'All the commentators agree in supposing, that the apostle here refers 'to the history of the martyrdom of Eleazar, and the mother, and her seven sons, mentioned in 'the second book of the Maccabees. And I was once carried away with the stream; but I am 'now persuaded, that the apostle, in this whole chapter, does not refer to any examples that are 'recommended by any other book, beside the holy scripture. Estius goes upon this same general 'principle: and therefore concludes from the common application of this passage, that it affords 'more than a probable argument for the sacred authority of the second book of the Maccabees. 'For,' says he, "all the examples of the saints mentioned, either expressly, or tacitly, in this "chapter, are taken from the sacred scriptures, that is, from those books, which were in the "days of the writer of this epistle esteemed to be sacred by Christians." Yet still how a man 'of Estius's excellent good sense could have a notion, that the second book of the Maccabees, 'was a part of sacred scripture, when it was confessedly written after the spirit of prophecy 'ceased in Malachi, and before it was restored in John the Baptist, is not a little surprising.

'But there is no more need to go to the Apocrypha, than to Fox's Book of Martyrs, for 'instances of men, "being tortured, not accepting deliverance." There are confessedly several 'instances of this kind in the Old Testament. The apostle, just after, more particularly points 'at the persons he means, viz. such as "were stoned, sawn asunder, or slain with the sword," 'ver. 37. "These were tortured. These did not accept deliverance." 'And these refused to 'accept of deliverance upon sinful terms, for this very end, "that they might obtain a blessed 'resurrection" to eternal life. These therefore may be the persons here meant.'

I am not fond of singularity: yet I hope I can follow truth alone, with a view of increasing her train, and having more company in time, attracted by the same reasons and arguments, by which I have been swayed myself.

We have just seen how Mr. Hallett argues, and that these persons are not referred to in the epistle to the Hebrews; but I do not say that he denied the fact, since he has not expressly told us.

I once thought that Dr. Prideaux doubted of the truth of this history, because he has not particularly related it; and because he points at the want of a material circumstance, the place of this transaction. But perhaps I was mistaken; however I shall transcribe here what he says: Conn. year before Christ 167, p. 181. 'On this occasion happened the martyrdom of Eleazar, 'and of the mother and her seven sons, which we have described to us by the author of the 'second book of the Maccabees, and by Josephus: by both of which a full account having been 'given of this matter, especially the latter; I refer my readers to them. Rufinus, in his Latin 'paraphrase of this book of Josephus, concerning the Maccabees, gives us the names of these 'seven brothers, and of their mother. [Maccabees, Aber, Machir, Judas, Achaz, Aseth, Jacob: 'and their mother's name Solomona: but the later Jewish historians call her Anna.] And he 'tells us, that as well they as Eleazar were carried from Judea to Antioch: and that it was there 'that they were judged by Antiochus; but without any authority that we know of for either,

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'except his own invention. The reason of the thing, as well as the tenor of the history, which 'is given us of it by both the authors I have mentioned, make it much more likely, that Jeru- 'salem, and not Antioch, was made the scene of this cruelty: and that, especially, since it being 'designed for an example of terror unto the Jews of Judea, it would have lost its force, if 'executed any where else than in that country.'

So says that eminent writer: but, I presume, that no modern, however learned and eminent, can determine the place of an event, which is entirely omitted by all ancient writers. If Rufinus had no authority for placing this transaction at Antioch, except his own invention; Prideaux can have no better authority in behalf of Jerusalem. And if these brothers were tortured, and slain in the presence of Antiochus, Rufinus's conjecture would be as plausible as any other. But all conjectures of this sort are vain and groundless. And they should be declined, and never be proposed, or mentioned by wise and sedate men. We cannot now add to what ancient authors have delivered. In history there is no room for invention.

I am desirous, gentlemen, if you please, by your means, to recommend these thoughts to the consideration of the public. A.

A LETTER

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE

REMARKS UPON THE INQUIRY INTO THE TRUTH OF THE HISTORY OF THE SEVEN BROTHERS IN THE MACCABEES.*

SIR,

I AM obliged to you for your Remarks, as they will give me an opportunity farther to clear up the point.

You chiefly object to what I have alleged from Mr. Hallett, relating to Heb. xi. 35.

You say, 'There are no instances in the Old Testament of any persons, who, on account of 'their faith in God, were sawn asunder, or wandered about in sheep-skins or goat-skins, or were 'afflicted by other instances of distress or persecution, mentioned in the three verses above men- 'tioned,' viz. 35, 36, 37.

But I somewhat wonder that you should say so. Is it not the opinion of all interpreters in general, that by the persons "who wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins," are intended Elijah and Elisha, and other prophets of the Old Testament? And, says Clement of Rome, a companion of St. Paul, in his epistle to the church of Corinth, ch. xvii. Let us be imitators of those who went about in goat-skins and sheep-skins, preaching the coming of Christ: we mean the prophets, Elijah, and Elisha, and Ezekiel, &c. which passage is largely quoted by Clement of Alexandria in the fourth book of his Stromata. And see 1 Kings xix. 13, 19. and 2 Kings ii. 8, 13, 14, in the Greek version, where Elijah's mantle is called a *melote*.

And Estius and Grotius have referred to persons in the Old Testament, who were instances of all the several sorts of distress and persecution, mentioned in ver. 36 and 37, though they also take notice of other like examples in later times.

Dr. Owen's observation upon ver. 36, which also may be applied elsewhere, is to this purpose: 'It is of no use to fix the particulars here mentioned to certain determinate persons. 'For seeing the apostle has left that undetermined, so may we do also. Certain it is, that there

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'were in these days believers, who through faith, patiently and victoriously underwent these 'things.'

You presently after say, 'Much less are there any instances of persons in these calamitous cir-'cumstances, to whom deliverance was offered on sinful conditions, in any of the canonical 'books of the Old Testament. Nor are there any persons mentioned in the said scriptures, to 'have expressed their hopes of obtaining a better resurrection, either in these, or any other 'circumstances.'

Here, Sir, you should have attended to what Mr. Hallett says, as quoted by me in the Inquiry. 'But there is no more need to go to the Apocrypha, than to Fox's Book of Martyrs, 'for instances of men, being tortured, not accepting deliverance. There are, confessedly, 'several instances of this kind in the Old Testament. The apostle, just after, particularly points 'at the persons he means. And these refused to accept deliverance upon sinful terms, for that 'very end, that they might obtain a blessed resurrection to eternal life.'

This appears to me very right. The persons, just referred to, and many others, who suffered death in the times of the Old Testament, might have avoided it, if they would have practised sinful compliances; but they refused so to do, in hopes of future recompenses.

Mr. Hallett's observation, so far as I am able to judge, is agreeable to the style of the apostle in this epistle, and particularly in this chapter: thus at ver. 24. "By faith Moses, when he came to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Moses did not tell her, nor any one else, that he would no more be called or reckoned her son; but he showed his refusal of that character by his conduct. As St. Stephen says, Acts vii. 23. "And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel." 'Non legitur eam adoptionem Moses verbis respuisse sed facto satis respuit, quando relicta aula regia ad fratres suos in afflictione egressus est, nec ad aulæ delicias ultra reversus, ut legitur.' Exod. cap. ii. and Acts vii. Estius.

In like manner, ver. 14. "For they that say such things, declare plainly, that they seek a country." Ver. 16. "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly." They declared and manifested this by their conduct, and by some of their words. Nevertheless, they never expressly said, that they sought, or desired, a better, and a heavenly country.

You observe, 'that the noun τυμπανον, as it stands for an instrument of torture, occurs not in any part of the canonical Greek scriptures.' You mean I think, of the Old Testament. I therefore add: nor is that word in St. Paul. But the word τυμπανιζομαι, used by him Heb. xi. 35, is in 1 Sam. xxi. 13, a part of canonical Greek scripture.

You add: 'Neither is any inflection of the word τυμπανιζομαι, signifying torturing in general, 'to be found any where, but in this single passage of the epistle to the Hebrews.

On the contrary Gataker, in his laboured Disquisition concerning this noun and verb, expressly says, that the verb is often used in that larger sense. 'Sed illud adjicere non abs usu fuerit, το απολυμπανιζεσθαι, latiori etiam significatu non raro usurpari. Quum enim modus iste tollendi miseros mortales, utpote qui promptus nimis & proclivis esset, frequentius adhiberetur, inde natum est, ut τυμπανιζεσθαι και απολυμπανιζεσθαι dicerentur, qui vi aliqua e medio tollebantur, sive fuste, sive reste, sive ferro, id fieret.' Misc. cap. 46. p. 912. Vid. & Poli Synops. in loc. p. 1375. M.

I shall allege one place where it is so used. It is in the epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons concerning their martyrs and confessors. 'The governor wrote to the emperor for 'directions concerning some who were in prison. The emperor directed, that they, who still 'confessed Christ should be put to death, [τους μεν απολυμπανισθηναι, ut confidentes gladio cæde-'rentur Vales.] and that they who renounced the faith should be set at liberty. When there-'fore the governor had again interrogated them, as many as were found to be Roman citizens, 'he ordered to be beheaded, the rest were cast to the wild beasts.'

'The apostle,' you say, 'or whoever wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, mentions the matter 'in very general terms, and with no other circumstances, than what might very naturally and 'probably happen to some martyrs in the persecution under Antiochus.'

But the history, to which you suppose the apostle to refer, is unnatural, and improbable, and very unlikely to happen under the persecution of Antiochus, or any other persecution whatever, as was before shown in the Inquiry.

You proceed. 'And as no critic seems to doubt but the history was extant, when the

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'epistle to the Hebrews was written, we may be sure, that whatever the writer of that epistle 'thought, the Hebrews, to whom he wrote, believed an history so honourable to their 'countrymen.'

But I do not see how we can be sure of that. This history is omitted in the first book of the Maccabees, where it might have been properly inserted, and probably would have been inserted, if it had been true and generally credited and respected by the Jewish people.

Josephus was contemporary with the apostle, and the Hebrews, to whom he wrote. But he did not write till after St. Paul's martyrdom, and after the death of many of the Hebrews, to whom he wrote. He has never taken any notice of these martyrs, though he had twice a fair occasion for it. How then can we be sure, that the history of the martyrs, in the second book of Maccabees, was generally believed and respected by the Hebrews?

I do not know when the second book of the Maccabees was published; but Mr. Whiston, who was well acquainted with the writings of Josephus, says, that he never made use of it. If therefore it was extant in his time, it was very obscure, and in little or no credit. Nor do we at all want it for explaining the epistle to the Hebrews.

Once more, Mr. Hallett, as you observe, affirms, 'that they who were tortured not accepting 'deliverance, ver. 35, and they who were stoned, sawn asunder, &c. ver. 37, were the same 'persons.' Whereas the text assures us, ver. 36, that they were not the same persons, but others.

But here you seem to me, partly, to mistake both St. Paul, and Mr. Hallett. The others are those next mentioned, who did not suffer death. And they are of four sorts. Some were exposed to "mockings," some to "scourgings," some to "bonds," some to "imprisonment." After which such are mentioned as suffered death: of which also, according to our present reading, there are four sorts. "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword." To these, and others, the apostle may refer. For there were many prophets and other good men, who suffered death, among the Jewish people, who might have saved their lives by sinful compliances. See Neh. ix. 26, and 1 Kings xviii. xix. There were, particularly, many such patient and victorious sufferers, in the times of the two prophets, Elijah and Elisha, from whom the "women," mentioned ver. 35, "received their dead raised to life again." After which therefore the apostle adds, most beautifully, and agreeably to the force and elegance, for which this epistle is so remarkable: "And others were put to death, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection."

I have allowed myself to be very minute and particular in my answer to your remarks, considering the uncommonness of the subject: for which reason I hope it will be excused by yourself and others.

Mr. Hallett says, 'All the commentators agree in supposing, that the apostle here refers to 'the histories in the second book of the Maccabees.' But perhaps he there allows more than he needed to do. Wolfius expresses himself in this cold and general manner: 'There are, who 'think there is here a reference to the seven brothers in the Maccabees. Ad septem fratres Mac-'cabeos respici, sunt, qui existiment.'

St. Chrysostom, in a homily upon part of this chapter, says, 'he thinks the persons here in-'tended are John and James: for ἀποτυμνισμος denotes beheading. They might have lived 'longer: but they who had raised up others to life, chose to die, that they might obtain a better 'resurrection.' In Hebr. Hom. 27, tom. XII. p. 248. I do not think this interpretation to be right: for St. Paul refers to such as lived before the coming of Christ. But we hence discern, that Chrysostom did not then think of the Maccabees, or that the apostle referred to them. Theophylact, following Chrysostom, says, 'they were beheaded,' meaning John, and James the son of Zebedee. But others by that word understand being beaten with clubs.

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A

LETTER

UPON THE PERSONALITY OF THE SPIRIT,

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1762, TO THE REV. MR. CALEB FLEMING.

SIR,

You refer me to John xvi. 13, as a difficult text relating to the personality of the spirit. I must refer you to the letter written in 1730, p. 141, 145, and p. 148, 150.—At p. 141, that and other texts are proposed; and in the same place follow explications of those texts sufficient to remove all difficulties.

Christ's promise of the spirit, and all his expressions made use of about it, as recorded in St. John's gospel, are explained in the Acts, where is the history of the accomplishment of all these promises. The fulfilment plainly shows, that by the spirit, to be sent, is meant an effusion of spiritual gifts of power, knowledge and understanding.

Our Lord himself has explained it thus, John vii. 38. "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." There is the plentiful effusion of knowledge, &c. It follows, ver. 39. "But this he spake of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given], because Jesus was not yet glorified." Miraculous gifts are the spirit. That is what Christ promised when he spoke of the spirit. So Mark xvi. 17, 18. "And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out dæmons: they shall speak with tongues: they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." These are the "living waters" promised John vii. 38, which at ver. 39, are said to be the spirit.

Acts v. 32, is a remarkable text, and is explained in the above letter, p. 150. "And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him:" that is, these are the miraculous gifts which God has bestowed upon us, and upon others, who believe in Jesus, &c. These miraculous gifts, bestowed upon believers, are the promised spirit, of which Christ told, John xv. 26, "He shall testify of me."

John xvi. 12. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." However, be easy, in a short time you shall be so illuminated from above, as to know all those things distinctly.

Ver. 13. "Howbeit, when the spirit of truth is come," or when the divine miraculous powers and gifts, which are to testify to the truth of my mission and doctrine, are poured out upon you, "He will guide you into all truth." You will be enabled to understand every thing relating to the institution which God is setting up by me, &c. So we find, that gradually the apostles were able to speak properly to Jews and Gentiles, as they were instructed in the right manner of receiving the Gentiles, of which they had no notion, whilst Christ was with them, nor till after they were illuminated from above, after his ascension.

It is certain that the Holy Ghost is often mentioned as a gift or power plainly. These texts may enable us to understand others, if we will exercise our reason. Dr. Ward says, p. 159, that the term, the "Holy Ghost," often denotes a power, cannot be questioned; as where the apostles and other Christians at that time, are said to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

There are no wishes of peace from the Spirit at the beginning or ending of the apostolical epistles; nor any where ascriptions of glory to the Spirit.

There are also other texts, leading us to think that the apostles knew not of any divine

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person under the name spirit. If they had, he would have been mentioned by them. 1 Tim. v. 21. "I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels." Rev. i. 4, 5. "Grace from him, which is—— and from the seven spirits before the throne, and from Jesus Christ." Our Lord will "come in the glory of the Father, with the holy angels." How could the holy spirit be omitted in all these places, if Jesus and his apostles knew there was a divine Spirit equal to the Father, or nearly so?

November 13, 1762.

Shall I add a few more thoughts upon the same subject?

By the Holy Ghost is plainly meant, in divers places, a power, a gift, an effusion of spiritual gifts. John vii. 39. "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given." So we translate, supplying the sense. But the Greek is, "for the Holy Ghost was not yet:" and so the Latin vulgate, and Beza, *nondum erat spiritus sanctus*. In Dr. Jortin's Life of Erasmus, vol. I. p. 420, are some curious observations upon that text. If by the Holy Ghost is to be understood a divine person, St. John would not say, that "he did not exist yet." Read also Acts xix. 1—19. There are twelve Jewish people who know not that there "was any Holy Ghost." The meaning is, they did not know that there was an effusion of spiritual gifts, in which they could partake. St. Paul laid his hands upon them, and the "Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." Compare Acts x. 45, and xi. 15—17.

Our Lord has told us what he meant by the Comforter," John xiv. 26, "but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," meaning the miraculous knowledge and understanding which they should receive by inspiration.

"The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" is blaspheming the miraculous works which Christ did, or professed to do, by the power or finger, or spirit of God. To ascribe those works to dæmons, or to Satan himself, was that blasphemy.

John xvi. 14. "He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." This relates to some things of which Christ had spoken, but not fully, and which the disciples did not yet understand; particularly the calling of the Gentiles, and the manner of receiving them. Says Christ, John x. 16. "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring." And he several times said, that many should come from the east and the west—and the children of the kingdom be cast out. These things were explained afterwards to the disciples by divers miraculous manifestations, as we see in the Acts, chap. x. and elsewhere. And gradually, by such means, the disciples were led into "all truth," that is, every thing relating to the gospel institution.

November 22, 1762.

END OF THE LETTER TO C. FLEMING.

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REMARKS

UPON

THE LATE DR. WARD'S DISSERTATIONS

UPON

SEVERAL PASSAGES OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

WHEREIN ARE SHOWN, BESIDE OTHER THINGS, THAT ST. JOHN COMPUTED THE HOURS OF THE DAY AFTER THE JEWISH MANNER: WHO ARE THE GREEKS, JOHN XII. WHO THE GRECIANS, ACTS VI. THE DESIGN OF THE APOSTOLIC DECREE, ACTS XV. THAT THERE WAS BUT ONE SORT OF JEWISH PROSELYTES: WHEREIN LAY THE FAULT OF ST. PETER, AND HOW ST. PAUL MAY BE VINDICATED.

INTRODUCTION.

Dr. Ward's intimate acquaintance with antiquity, and his uncommon skill in all parts of literature are well known. His sincere piety and respect for the sacred scriptures were as conspicuous. And his dissertations, though posthumous, have been well received by the public. Nevertheless among many curious criticisms, and just observations, there are some things, which appear to deserve farther consideration. I hope, therefore, that my making remarks upon some places, where I hesitate, will not be reckoned inconsistent with the respect which I long had, and still have for the learned and pious author.

And I may take this opportunity to enlarge upon some articles, beyond what the design of making remarks would require.

CHAP I.

Page 73. diss. xxi. 'The case of the dæmoniac, who resided among the tombs on the coast of Gadara.'

As my remarks are to be made in the order of the dissertations, I begin with this. Upon which I have received some observations in a letter from my much esteemed friend, Mr. Thomas Mole, which I shall here transcribe.

'I have read the Dissertations of Dr. Ward: among which I find one upon the case of the 'dæmoniac, who resided among the tombs on the coast of Gadara.

'This affair of the possessions is an embarrassment, which one would be glad fairly to get rid 'of. The interpretation, which represents them as mad, or otherwise grievously diseased, seems 'to be the only method effectually to remove it. A great deal has been written to show the 'probability of this explanation, and principally by yourself. Our late friend seems to have 'been very tenacious of the other sense, and treats them as real possessions. He justly observes

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'the impropriety of calling devils what in the evangelists is called dæmons; but does not, I 'think, so fairly, as one would desire, argue in support of their being possessions.

'The man,' he says, p. 75, 'is here described, as wholly unconversable, so fierce that no one 'dared come near him. This must have been at times only. For it is said, Mark v. 4, that he 'had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by 'him, and the fetters broken in pieces." So that it is going farther than the text allows, to 'say of him, that none dared to come near him, during all the time, since he was first seized: 'as he evidently, I think, means. For he adds immediately: he had lived a long time in that 'condition.

'When it is added by St. Mark, ver. 4, "neither could any man tame him," it seems to me, 'that there had been many trials of cure undertaken, and various methods used for that purpose, 'though without success, especially if he was a man of any note in that [a] city. For εκ πολεως, '"out of the city," in St. Luke, must, I think, refer to the place of his habitation, while he was 'sane, rather than when thus disordered, and from which he came, when he met Jesus. And 'the word, δαμαζω, here used, and in St. James iii. 7, of "taming wild beasts," and the "tongues 'of men," seems not improperly to express the cure of madness, and perhaps more properly than 'the dispossession of dæmons. It might deserve our inquiry, whether it is never so used by the 'ancients, in treating of maniacal cases.

'It appears farther probable to me, that this man had his madness by fits, or at certain 'seasons, with intervals of sanity between them: and that when his fits were observed to be 'coming on, he was bound by his friends (with whom he might possibly have lived in those 'intervals) to prevent his doing harm to himself, or others, and have him more under command. 'Does not St. Luke say, or mean this? viii. 29. "For oftentimes, πολλοις χρονοις, it had caught 'him, and he was kept Φυλασσομενος, bound with chains and fetters. And he brake the bands, 'and was driven of the devil into the wilderness." St. Mark says, he had been "often bound," 'πολλακις. St. Matthew, viii. 28, ascribes to him this exceeding fierceness only, when coming 'out of the tombs to them.

'Hence I would farther observe, that we are under no necessity of allowing what we find 'asserted, that he had lived a long time in this condition; and therefore was neither capable, 'nor had any opportunity of knowing any thing concerning Christ or his character. For though 'he had been ever so long a time disordered, if there had been any intervals (and the longer 'had been the time, it is likely there had been the more:) might he not in some one or other 'of those intervals, have acquired some knowledge of the character, and even of the person of 'Christ? And hence, in his fits, especially, when Christ appeared in his sight, discourse and 'behave to him as he did: only allowing for what his disorder made him mingle therewith.

'What is farther said, p. 76, concerning the inhabitants of the neighbouring town, that they 'do not seem to have known more of Christ than this man, is with me alike void of probability. 'For Christ had been teaching the doctrine of the kingdom, and working miracles, a considerable 'time, and had taken up his residence at Capernaum: in which, and in the neighbourhood 'thereof, he lived a good while. Is it credible that all this could have been, and St. Matthew, 'iv. 24, (as is by our late friend observed, p. 78.) had said before, "that his fame went 'throughout all Syria?" And yet the people of this town, not above perhaps seven or eight

[a] "Especially if he was a man of note in that city."] That appears to me a curious thought, and a valuable hint; which may lead us to consider, whether there are not in this history some things which may induce us to suppose, that the dæmoniac, to whom St. Mark and St. Luke confine their narration, was a man of some substance. And I think there are several such things. In St. Mark, v. 19, our Lord says: "Go home to thy friends." Υπαγε εις τον οικον σε προς τους σους. Literally, 'go to thy house to thy own people,' meaning family, or friends. In Luke viii. 39, "return to thy own house." Υποστρεφε εις τον οικον σε. Care had been taken of him, and there had been, as is manifest, divers attempts made to cure his disorder, or to relieve and restrain him under it. And when the multitude from the city, and from the country round about came to Jesus, they saw the man sitting, and clothed. Clothing therefore had been brought to him, and probably from his own house, in the adjacent city, and from his family. They knew where he was, though he had escaped from them; and upon the first intelligence concerning what had happened, they recollected the distress he must be in, for want of clothing: they therefore immediately sent him apparel. And that they were his own garments, which he had been used to wear when composed, or at least such in which he could make a decent appearance, may be collected from his request to be with Jesus, and accompany him. This circumstance may be one reason why St. Mark and St. Luke give an account of this one dæmoniac only, though there were two, as St. Matthew says. Finally, his being a person of good condition in the city where he dwelt, might render him better qualified to speak of this great work. Any man, however mean, deserved to be attended to, when he spoke of a miracle wrought upon himself, of which divers others were witnesses: but a man of substance, and a reputable inhabitant of the place might do it to better advantage.

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'miles distant, and to which a boat might pass in a night's time from Capernaum, had never 'heard and knew nothing of him? What! spread over all Syria, and never reached a place 'within a few miles of him? I allow it is a general expression, and must admit of limitation. 'But I can see no other ground for excepting this place, than the serving an hypothesis.

'Nor does the instance adduced, p. 79, from Mark i. 21, &c, prove any thing, as I think, to 'the purpose for which it is brought. For though that was something earlier in the ministry of 'Christ than this, and he might be then less known; yet he had been long enough known there 'for that person to have heard of him. For Mark i. 15, he had begun to preach the gospel of 'the kingdom of God, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: 'repent ye, and believe the gospel:" and walking by the sea of Galilee, he had called first 'Simon and Andrew, and afterwards James and John his brother, ver. 16—20, and I suppose, 'had wrought some miracles. It is not impossible, but the person who was cured in the syna-'gogue of Capernaum, being left at his liberty, and allowed to enter there, might have heard of 'what Christ had done in his way thither: and heard, or heard of, what he had preached after 'he came thither. And in St. Luke iv. 31—37, it should seem, that this person was cured, not 'upon Christ's first coming to Capernaum. Which enlargeth the time, that this man had to 'come to the knowledge of him.

'There is no necessity therefore to suppose, that these persons could have no knowledge of 'Christ, and that it must not be they, but the devils only in them, who knew him.

'The arguing, p. 82, from the mention made of "casting out devils," after raising the dead, 'the commission given by Christ to his disciples, Matt. x. 8, when he sent them forth, is, I 'think, of no force: for there may be no necessity of supposing the expression to rise higher 'than the other, from its being placed after it; as appears from other texts. Luke ix. 1, 2. '"Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, 'and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." 'And Matt. x. 1. "And when he had called unto him the twelve disciples, he gave them power 'against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of 'disease." See also Matt. iv. 24. It may likewise be observed, that if the expression of '"casting out devils" be supposed to refer to real possessions; it is not an expression of greater 'power, than that of raising the dead. Nor does the fact carry in it a greater degree of evi-'dence and conviction: because there is not equal evidence to be had that a person is really 'possessed, as there is of a person's being really dead. And therefore it may be as well placed 'after raising the dead, if it be interpreted of persons mad, as if it be understood of persons 'possessed.

'May not the term σωφρονουντα, Mark v. 15. Luke viii. 35. "in his right mind," by which 'this person is represented after his cure, as it is used both by sacred and profane writers in op-'position to madness, afford some countenance to this interpretation?'

So far my good friend.

One of my arguments against real possessions [a] was taken 'from the manner in which the 'persons, said to have "unclean spirits," speak of our Lord Jesus Christ.

'For such persons did often bear an honourable testimony to our Lord. So Mark i. 24. 'Luke iv. 41. But it is incredible, that Satan, or any other evil spirits, under his influence and 'direction, should freely and cheerfully bear witness to our Lord, as the Christ.

'Indeed, this appears to me a very forcible argument. I have been sometimes apt to think, 'that this consideration has been overlooked by learned and pious men, who have so readily 'admitted real possessions.'

So I said. But Dr. Ward is not at all moved by that consideration. He even thinks the testimony of dæmons to our Lord, to have been of some value, and of use, especially for encouraging the disciples.

Diss. p. 81. 'And as to the case of these dæmoniacs among the Gergesenes, there seems to 'have been the greatest propriety at that time, not only for his permitting the devils to confess 'him to be the Son of God, but likewise to worship him. For it does not appear, that any other 'persons were then present, but Christ himself, and his disciples, except the dæmoniacs. And 'this was not long before he sent forth his disciples both to preach, and also "to heal the sick,

[a] See Vol. i. p. 254.

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'—— to raise the dead, and cast out devils," Matt. x. 7, 8. Therefore what could be more 'proper, or give them higher encouragement to hope for success in their work, than to see the 'devils thus subject to their master, and paying homage to him?'

But first, it is not at all likely that our Lord should accept the testimony of dæmons in private, if he did not receive it in public. How he checked and disallowed the confessions of persons under these disorders, may be seen Mark i. 23—26, and Luke iv. 33—35. Dr. W. supposeth that there was great propriety in permitting such confessions, when few were present. But I am not able to discern that propriety.

Secondly, there were others then present with our Lord, beside the disciples, and the dæmoniacs. For St. Matthew says, viii. 28. "And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce." St. Mark v. 1, 2. "And they came over unto the other side of the sea—— And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit." Luke viii. 27. "And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes."

The place of the present abode of these dæmoniacs was on the sea coast. When they saw our Saviour and the disciples come on shore, they immediately came toward them. Nor can there be any doubt made, that the sailors also, in whose ship our Saviour and his disciples had arrived, came ashore with them, or presently after. The appearance of such objects could not but excite their curiosity. Moreover, in the voyage from the other side there had happened a great storm, which our Lord composed by his word. And the men of the ship, as well as the disciples, "marvelled greatly," or were exceedingly surprised, "saying: What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!" Matt. viii. 27. Nor were these men now first acquainted with our Lord. Before this they had heard him preach, and might have seen some other miracles done by him. Besides, as we are assured by St. Mark, upon our Lord's saying in the evening, "Let us pass over to the other side," he not only set out himself in the ship, where he had been preaching: but "there were also several other little ships," filled, it is likely, with men who had attended on his discourses in the day-time. These knew he was going to "the other side" of the lake: and would be there as soon as he, or before. In short, our Lord was now, as it were, in the height of his ministry. And we know from the evangelists, that before this time, he was followed with uncommon zeal by multitudes wherever he went, even into desert places. As is shown Mark i. 45, and Luke iv. 42, 43. So that before this man, or these men, worshipped our Lord, or acknowledged him to be the Son of God, many people must have been gathered together.

P. 75. For proving that this unhappy person was not barely distracted, our author says: 'Besides, it is plain that he could not be apprised of his coming at that time, for the ship sailed 'over from the other side in the night. And so soon as Christ came ashore, and the man saw 'him at a distance, he ran to him, and worshipped him.'

But there is not sufficient precision in that proposition. Two things are joined together, which ought to be separated. When our Lord, and his disciples, (let me now add) and other people, landed, he came toward them. And from the respect shown to our Lord by the disciples, and by all the company, he discerned him to be the principal person; but he did not worship our Lord, nor confess him to be the Christ, until after some discourse, as appears from the history.

Matt. viii. 28, 29, already cited. "And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce——And, behold, they cried out, saying: What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?"

But let us compare the other evangelists. Mark v. 2. "And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit—— Ver. 6—8. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him. And cried with a loud voice, and said: What have *I* to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? I adjure thee, that thou torment me not. For he had said unto him: Come out of him, thou unclean spirit."

And Luke viii. 27—29. "And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man which had devils long time—— When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God Most

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High. I beseech thee, torment me not. For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man."

According to all the Evangelists therefore, this dæmoniac, or these two dæmoniacs, acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God. But from St. Mark and St. Luke it appears, that this was not done until after our Lord had some discourse with him. From this discourse, and from the general intelligence which he had before received concerning Jesus, in the intervals of his disorder, he was enabled and disposed to speak of him as he did.

St. Mark alone expressly says, that the man of whom he speaks "worshipped" Christ. But the same thing is said by St. Luke in another phrase, "he fell down before him." And it is implied in what is attested by all the Evangelists, that he acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God. So in the history of the man born blind, whom our Lord had healed. John ix. 35—38. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out. And when he had found him, he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered, and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." So likewise, after our Lord's ascension. Matt. xxviii. 17. "And when they saw him they worshipped him."

I have no intention to add any new arguments concerning the case of the dæmoniacs, mentioned in the New Testament. I rely upon those which were formerly alledged. And let every one judge as he sees best. But I would take this opportunity to propose some observations upon the history of the cure of the two unhappy men in the country of the Gadarenes, which have not been yet mentioned.

In accounting for the loss of the swine several things are said at p. 260, vol. I. The distraction, under which the man called Legion had laboured, was very grievous. He was a hideous form, and his action was very violent. When he had conceived the thought of gratifying the evil spirits, by which he imagined himself to be possessed, with the destruction of the swine, he would without much difficulty drive them off the precipice. If some few of them were put in motion, the whole herd would follow.

I would now say more distinctly, that the loss of the swine was occasioned by a fright. When our blessed Lord said, "go," as in St. Matthew: or "he gave them leave," or "he suffered them," as in the other Evangelists: I think, that one or both the demoniacs went hastily towards the swine; and by some noise, or action, a few of them were affrighted; which fright was immediately communicated to the rest, whereupon the whole herd went off with great violence: and the way being steep and leading to the lake, they all perished in the water. This is easy to be apprehended.

There are very few who have not been witnesses to something like this in the horse; who takes fright at very slight things, one knows not what sometimes: though at other times from manifest causes. Whenever it happens, he runs away with great violence, to his own perdition and the great hazard and oftentimes great detriment of others: and, if there are several together, the whole set, or team, becomes ungovernable. This is certain, and well known to almost every body.

I have also observed in our fields near London, where have been many horses grazing, if one is frightened, all the rest are alarmed. The same is seen in our fields, where are large herds of horned cattle. If one is disturbed by the barking of a dog, or the sport of idle boys, or any other odd occurrence; all the rest, to the utmost bounds of the enclosure, are alarmed and put in motion. The same is likewise well known of flocks of sheep, and flocks of geese, and sparrows. If one of the flock take fright, all the rest hasten away in the same direction. I believe this to be true of all animals that are gregarious; as were these swine, a large herd, feeding by each other. If one or two of them took fright, and tended toward the lake; all the rest, without exception, would go off the same way with the utmost precipitation.

By all the three Evangelists we are assured, that after the loss of the swine, and the cure of the

* 'On Monday (May 7.) as J— H—, Esq. was coming to town from his house at Carshalton in Surrey, in his post-chaise, the horses took fright, just by Newington church, and ran with such violence against a waggon, passing through the turnpike, that one of the horses was killed on the spot, and the other so much bruised, that he died in an hour afterwards, and the chaise was almost torn to pieces. But happily the gentleman received no hurt, and the driver was but slightly bruised.'—The General Evening Post, Thursday May 10, 1759.

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dæmoniacs, the Gadarenes besought our Lord "that he would depart out of their coasts." This I have twice, that is, at p. 240, and p. 243, vol. I. ascribed to the carnal temper of these people: that being apprehensive of suffering in their worldly interests, instead of entreating Jesus to stay with them, a while at least, they joined together with much unanimity in beseeching him to depart out of their coasts.

Nor do I now say, that a sensual temper of mind had no influence on them, for producing that request. Nevertheless, perhaps, that alone was not the whole cause. I therefore would add as follows.

It is observable from divers instances in the Old Testament, that special and extraordinary manifestations of the Divine Presence were generally awful and affecting to the men to whom they were made, though the message was gracious. I refer not only to Ex. xx. 19. but also to ch. xxxiv. 30. and Judges vi. 22. and xiii. 22. See likewise Ex. xxxiii. 20.

There are likewise instances in the New Testament. How comfortable the tidings! Luke ii. 8—15. Yet it is said of the shepherds, ver. 9. "And they were sore afraid." And Luke v. 8—10. "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken. And so were also James and John, the sons of Zebedee.—— And Jesus said unto Simon: Fear not, henceforth thou shalt catch men." Upon another occasion, Mark iv. 41. "And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another: What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him!" Compare Luke viii. 25. And on the mount. Matt. xvii. 6, 7. "And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid." Compare Mark ix. 6. and Luke ix. 34.

Let us now observe what is said of the Gadarenes. Mark v. 15. "And they (meaning the people of the neighbouring town and country) come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid." To the like purpose exactly in Luke viii. 35. And at ver. 37. it is said: "Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear."

If Peter desired our Lord "to depart from him, because he was a sinful man:" if he, and the rest, were at other times so astonished that they knew not what to say, nor what to think of themselves: though all the great works which they had seen performed by him were healing and beneficial: well might the people of this country be struck with awe at the sight of the man called legion, "sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind." For it was a work of Divine Power and a token of the Divine Presence. And, very probably, they thought themselves unqualified for the residence of so great and holy a person among them.

At their request our Lord departed, and took ship, and returned to the place whence he had come: well knowing that many there were in earnest expectation of him.

But though our Lord himself staid no longer with the Gadarenes, he left there the man whom he had cured. "He prayed, that he might be with him. However Jesus suffered him not. But saith unto him: Go home to thy friends, and tell them, how great things the Lord hath done for thee. And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him. And all men did marvel." And it is not an unreasonable, nor an improbable supposition, that some of that country did afterwards come over into Galilee or Judea to see Jesus, that they might receive benefit from his great wisdom, or great power.

CHAP II.

PAGE 106. Diss. xxviii. 'Who those Greeks were, who desired to see Jesus? And whether they were admitted?' John xii. 20, 21.

Dr. Ward well observes at p. 107. 'The greater part of Syria was in our Saviour's time 'called Greece by the Jews. Hence, when he was in the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and a

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'woman besought him to cast the evil spirit out of her daughter, she is called "a Greek, a Syro-'phœnician by nation," Mark vii. 26. And these Greeks who were desirous to see Jesus, were, 'probably, of the same nation, and known to Philip, who is here said to have been of Bethsaida 'of Galilee."

The same observation is in Grotius [a] upon this text. And I had occasion some while ago, in considering another text, to say: 'It [b] was common with all authors about that time, to call the 'people, who inhabited the cities of Asia and Syria, Greeks.'

Our author says, p. 107. 'They seem to have been proselytes, as they are reckoned among 'those who came up to Jerusalem to worship at the feasts.'

Which expression is ambiguous. For, as many learned men of our time say, there were two sorts of proselytes, some called proselytes of the gate, others proselytes of righteousness; Dr. W— may mean the former, as do Whitby and Hammond. I know nothing of that sort of half-proselytes. I think [c] there were not any such men in any part of the world in the times of our Saviour and his apostles.

That these men were not proselytes, or men circumcised after the manner of the Jews, appears to me very probable. For all proselytes were entitled to the same religious privileges with native Jews, or the descendants of Abraham and Jacob. Such therefore, as it seems, might have had free access to Christ at the temple. The modesty of these persons may make us think of the Centurion, who, when he entreated our Lord to heal his sick servant, that was dear to him, and our Lord was going toward his house with some elders of the Jews, who also joined in the same request; "he sent friends unto him saying," not only, "that he was not worthy that Jesus should enter under his roof:" but likewise, "that neither thought he himself worthy to come unto him," Luke vii. 1—8. Moreover Philip himself seems to have hesitated about the propriety of the request of these persons. For he also consulted Andrew, before he made the proposal to our Lord. So is the history. "And there were certain Greeks among them, who came up to worship at the feast. The same came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida in Galilee, and desired him, saying: Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh, and telleth Andrew. And again, Andrew and Philip told Jesus."

Their request to see Jesus, I imagine, implied a desire to have access to his person, and to have some conversation with him. Which request, I think, was granted. Supposing these men to have been uncircumcised Gentiles, it was a favour, and a condescension according to the Jewish maxims. But the woman, who was of the same country, and is also called a Greek, came near to our Lord, and spoke to him several times, and he to her, and at length very comfortably, and healed her daughter. Matt. xv. 21—28. Mark vii. If our Lord yielded so far to the importunity of that woman, why might he not also grant the request of these Greeks, though Gentiles? It is manifest, that she was no better. For our Lord said to her: "Let the children first be filled. It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it unto the dogs."

The sequel of the history confirms this supposition. In the hearing of these persons, or soon after they were gone, our Lord made use of these expressions. Ver. 23. "And Jesus answered them, saying: The hour is come, that the Son of man shall be glorified," that is, by the faith of the Gentiles, though many of the Jewish people rejected him. And afterwards, as ver. 32. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The coming of these persons therefore was very acceptable to our Lord. And he thereupon pleaseth himself with the prospect of the speedy and extensive progress of his doctrine. So after the profession made by the fore-mentioned centurion, of faith in our Lord's power to heal his servant at a distance, "He said to them that followed: I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven," and what there follows. Matt. viii. 10—12.

That the Greeks here spoken of were Gentiles, was the opinion of the ancient writers of the church, as [d] Epiphanius, [e] Chrysostom, [f] Theophylact, [g] Theodore of Mopsuestia, [h] Jerom, and

[a] Videntur autem hi Gentiles fuisse Syrophœnices. Nam alibi notavimus, Marci vii. 26. Ἑλληνίδα vocari, quæ aliis est Syrophœnissa. Et his ob vicinitatem facilior notitia cum Galilæis Bethsaïdensibus, quod illi forte in partes Tyri et Sidonis excurrebant. Grot. ad Joh. xii. 20.

[b] See vol. III. p. 266. ch. xi. § 7. note [a].

[c] Ib. ch. xviii. § 11.

[d] Haer. 30. num. xxvii.

[e] In Joh. hom. 66. al. 65. n. 3. p. 390. tom. VIII.

[f] In loc.

[g] Apud Cotelerii Caten Patr. in Jo. p. 309.

[h] Ad Rufin. T. II. p. 217. al. ep 131.

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others: who never were perplexed with the notion of two sorts of proselytes, which has gained so much credit among learned Christians of late times.

And we are likewise assured by Josephus, that [a] Gentiles, or such as were aliens, were wont to come to Jerusalem, to worship there at the time of the Jewish festivals. Though uncircumcised men might not eat the passover, nor offer sacrifices at the temple, they might pray there. And when our Lord cleansed the temple, and drove the buyers and sellers, with their merchandise, from the outer court, he reminded them that it was "written, that God's house should be called an house of prayer for all people." Is. lvi. 7. Matt. xxi. 13. Mark xi. 17. Luke xix. 46.

CHAP. III.

PAGE 125. Diss. xxxii. 'How to reconcile St. John's account concerning the time of our 'Saviour's crucifixion with that of the three other Evangelists.'

St. John writes, ch. xix. 13, 14. "When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat in the judgment seat —— And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews: Behold your King." St. Mark says, xv. 25. "And it was the third hour, and they crucified him."

For reconciling these accounts our learned author says, p. 127, 128. 'And about six in the 'morning Pilate brought him forth to the Jews, and said: "Behold your king." This is the 'time which John refers to, and calls the "sixth hour," that is, of the civil day. The three fol- 'lowing hours were employed in preparing for his crucifixion, and that of the two robbers, and 'carrying them to the place without the city. At the conclusion of those three hours he was 'crucified. Which Mark calls the "third hour," that is, of the natural day. And by the same 'reckoning must be understood the "sixth hour," at which the darkness commenced: and also 'the "ninth hour," when he expired: as related by all the Evangelists, except John: who has 'used the Roman way of reckoning in some other places also, as ch. i. 39. iv. 6, and xx. 19. 'And it is not improbable, that he writing so late might choose that way of reckoning the hours 'of the day, which was customary among the Romans: as the others had followed that, which 'was practised by the Jews.'

To me it seems, that St. John reckons the hours of the day as the other Evangelists do, according to the custom of the Jews. Nor do I comprehend, how any historian could write intelligibly of transactions in Judea, without observing the Jewish custom, unless he gives particular notice of it.

In the history of the nobleman of Capernaum, who came to Jesus, "beseeching him to come down and heal his son," it is said, John iv. 51, 52. "And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend: and they said unto him, Yesterday, about the seventh hour the fever left him." These persons must be supposed to speak according to the ordinary custom of the country in which they lived. And by the "seventh hour" must be meant about one of the clock afternoon, according to our computation.

And in chap. xi. 9. our Saviour himself says, very agreeably to the Jewish manner, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" But I do not insist upon this as decisive, because the Romans, and others, might express themselves in like manner, meaning the natural day.

John iv. 5, 6. "Then cometh Jesus unto a city called Sychar: —— now Jacob's well was there: Jesus therefore being wearied with his journey sat thus on the well. And it was about the sixth hour," that is, says Whitby, 'about noon.' So it is generally [b] understood, and very rightly, as I apprehend.

[a] Αλλ' ωδε τοις αλλοφυλοις, οσοι κατα θρησκειαν παρησαν. De B. J. l. 6. cap. ix. 3.

[b] Vid. supr. cap. i. 39. Causam sitis ostendit, quia et multum itineris fecerat, et jam erat meridies. Grot. in ver. 6. Quia, inquit, lassus erat de viâ, et instabat meridies, maximus videlicet diei æstus. Bez. in loc.

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So says [a] Cyril of Alexandria, not very far below the beginning of the fifth century, in his comment upon this text; whom I transcribe in the margin. And in like manner Isaac, surnamed the Great, who flourished about the middle of the same century. Among his works Dr. Asseman reckons five sermons concerning the Samaritan woman. The first of which begins in this manner. [b] 'At the sixth hour, when the day was grown hot, our Saviour came to the well.'

I think this must be right. For I do not see how those ancient writers, who lived not very remote from Judea, could be mistaken.

Josephus dwelt at Rome, and wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem. Nevertheless he also computes the hours in the same way. Giving an account of an assembly at Taricheas in Galilee, in a proseucha, or oratory; he says, 'There [c] certainly would have been a great disturbance, if 'the assembly had not been dissolved by the approach of the sixth hour, at which time we are 'wont to go to dinner on the sabbaths.' And he assures us, 'That [d] the priests at the temple 'were employed in killing paschal lambs from the ninth hour to the eleventh.'

John i. 35—39. "Again, the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples. And looking upon Jesus, as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. —— And they said to him: Rabbi, where dwellest thou? He saith unto them: Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour." Or, as it is said in the margin of some of our bibles, 'two hours before night.' Which explication is very reasonable and obvious. The connexion leads us to think, that the day was declining, when these disciples went to the house where Jesus dwelt. Nor is there any consideration that should induce us to think of our ten in the forenoon. For inquisitive, attentive, and well-disposed men, as these were, might learn a great deal in the space of two hours' conversation with so excellent a master as they now applied to.

There still remains one text more to be considered. John xx. 19. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them: Peace be unto you."

As our author here particularly refers to Dr. Benson, I must observe what he says: 'We [e] have yet a more evident proof, that St. John followed the Roman method of reckoning the hours of the day. For speaking of that very day, on which our blessed Lord rose from the dead, he first mentions his appearing to Mary Magdalene. And then intimates, that he appeared to other of his disciples, that same day. But his words are very remarkable. "The same day, when it was evening, being the first day of the week:" and the disciples had bolted the doors for fear of the Jews: "Then came Jesus and stood in the midst of them," &c. Now, no Jew would have used that language. No! When "the evening was come," they would have called it "the second day of the week." St. John, therefore, in this place, hath, in effect, (though not in express words) told his attentive readers, that he has followed the Roman computation of the hours of the day. For, according to that, it was still the first day of the week, and the same day on which our Lord arose: notwithstanding the sun was set, and the "evening come." And the Jews would, unquestionably, have reckoned it "the second day of the week."

This whole argument, as every one sees, depends upon the supposition, that this appearance of our Lord to his disciples was after sun-set, and perhaps late in the night: as Grotius, [f] and some others have thought. But other learned men are rather of opinion, that [g] our Lord showed himself to his disciples by day-light. Nor is it said, that the doors had been shut by the disciples because it was night, but "for fear of the Jews."

[a] Ευαφορμως επι τη πηγη καταλυοντα δεικνυει τον Ιησεν. Ηλιε γαρ ακμαιοτατην απο μεσων αψιδων τοις επι της γης την ακτινα καταχεοντος, και ακρατοις τα σωματα καταφλεγοντος ζολαις, το μεν επι προσω βαδιζειν εκ αζημιον. κ. λ. Cyr. H. in Joan T. IV. p. 179.

[b] Primus sic incipit. Horâ sextâ, quum dies incaluisset, venit ad puteum Dominus. Ap. Assem. Bib. Or. T. i. p. 232. p. 79

[c] Και παντως αν εις σασιν εχωρησαν, ει μη την συνεδον διελυσεν επελθουσα εκτη ωρα, καθ' ην τοις σαββασιν αριστοποιεισθαι νομιμον εσιν ημιν. Jos. Vit. § 54. p. 26.

[d] . . . καθ' ην θυεσι μεν απο εννατης ωρας μεχρι ενδεκατης. De B. J. l. 6. ix. 3.

[e] See the History of the first planting the Christian Religion, second edit. App. n. 4. p. 52, 53.

[f] Jam multâ nocte. Grot. in Jo. xx. 19.

[g] Existente vesperâ, et quidem satis serâ, januis clausis. Quod licet a plerisque consideretur, ut signum provectæ noctis, nobis tamen minime ita videtur. Circumstantiis enim omnibus rite perpensis, videtur concludendum esse, quod adhuc ante sextam vespertinam hæc apparitio discipulis contigerit. Lampe in Joh. loc. T. III. p. 685. Et confer. Wolf. in loc.

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This appearance of our Lord was not made, until after the return of the two that had been at Emmaus. And it will be of great use to us to attend to that history, as it stands in St. Luke's Gospel, ch. xxiv. 13—36.

"And behold two of them went that same day to a village, called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things, which had happened. Whilst they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus drew near, and went with them. —— And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going. And he made as though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him, saying: Abide with us. For it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them: [or as he was sitting down to table with them:] he took bread, and blessed it, and brake unto them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight:" that is, he retired, and went away. "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them. —— And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known unto them in breaking of bread. —— And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them: Peace be unto you."

When they entreated Jesus to "abide with them," they said: "It is toward evening, and the day is far spent," or has already begun to decline, οτι προς εσπεραν εστι, και κεκλικεν η ημερα. It was past noon, and might be near our three afternoon. As they were sitting down to eat, looking more directly at Jesus, than they had yet done, they knew him. Our Lord thereupon retired, and they hastened to the disciples. Emmaus was about a two hours walk from Jerusalem. They might get thither more than an hour before sun-set. Soon after our Lord came in. He might have been there before them: but he was willing that the disciples, and they that were with them, should be prepared for his appearing among them by the testimony of these two, added to the testimonies of Peter, and the women who had already seen him.

All this may be confirmed by the history of the miracle of the five loaves and five thousand. Matt. xiv. 15. "And when it was evening, his disciples came unto him, saying: This is a desert place, and the time is now past." Mark vi. 35. "And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said: This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed." Says Mr. Macknight[a] in his instructive and edifying account of this miracle, 'The five thousand men, 'beside women and children, were all fed with such expedition, that though the thing was not 'so much as proposed to the disciples, till about three, all was over by five of the clock in the 'afternoon.'

I have endeavoured to show, that St. John followed the Jewish computation of the hours of the day. I am not now concerned to reconcile him with the other Evangelists. Solutions of this difficulty may be found in[b] Editors and Commentators. Some think, that St. John's original number was "the third hour," as in St. Mark: and that his number has been since altered. Others propose different solutions. But so far as I am able to judge, a solution, depending upon the supposition, that St. John followed the Roman computation of the hours of the day, is not likely to be right.

The learned men, with whom I have been arguing, think, that St. John wrote his Gospel very late, not before the year of our Lord ninety-seven, a little before his own death. But that is said without ground. It is more probable, that[c] St. John wrote his Gospel, before the destruction of Jerusalem, about the year of Christ sixty-eight: though not till after the other three Evangelists, and after having read their Gospels, as all the Ancients testify. However, if he had written after the destruction of Jerusalem, it could not but be very proper to observe the Jewish computation in speaking of things done among the Jews, in their own country, and before that event.

[a] See his Harmony of the Gospels. Sect. 60. p. 173.

[b] Vid. Mill. et Wetstein. Bengel. in Cris. et Gnomon. ad Jo. xix. 20. Vid. et Grot. et Wolf. et Lampe in loc. et Bez. ad Marc xv. 29. Basnag. ann. 33. n. vii.

[c] See vol. III. ch. ix. § 9, 10.

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CHAP. IV.

PAGE 141. Diss. xxxv. 'The manner of embalming dead bodies among the Jews, and particularly that of our Saviour.'

Here it is said, p. 149, 150. 'The other Evangelists indeed take notice, that the women 'afterwards carried spices to the sepulchre. For, as Joseph and Nicodemus doubtless embalmed 'the body privately, after it was carried from the cross; the women, as they were not present, 'might know nothing of it. And considering the shortness of the time, they might imagine, that 'nothing had been done: and therefore were willing to do what they could themselves.'

This is said by our learned author, for removing a difficulty, arising from what is said by St. John, and the other Evangelists. St. John says, ch. xix. 38—40. not only, that "Joseph of Arimathea," who is also mentioned by the other Evangelists, "besought Pilate, that he might take the body of Jesus, and that Pilate gave him leave:" but adds, "There came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight:" including as I imagine, the bandages as well as the spices. "Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury," meaning such persons as were of eminence and distinction.

Nevertheless St. Mark says, xvi. 1, 2. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might anoint him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre, at the rising of the sun." See also Luke xxiii. 55, 56. and chap. xxiv. 1, 2.

As our Lord's female friends prepared spices, and brought them to the sepulchre; our author concludes that they knew nothing of what had been done by Joseph and Nicodemus.

But it is manifest from all the Evangelists, that the women, who attended our Lord's crucifixion, attended also his interment. St. John himself says, ch. xix. 25. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." And St. Matthew, ch. xxvii. 55—61. "And many women were there, beholding afar off—— Among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.—— Joseph of Arimathea—— went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.—— And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre." And St. Mark expressly says, xv. 47. "And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, beheld where he was laid." See likewise ch. xvi. 1—3. From which two Evangelists, and also from Luke xxiv. 1, 2. it appears, that the women knew every thing concerning our Saviour's interment, to the placing of the stone at the door of the sepulchre. But they knew nothing of the watch or guard of soldiers, set there afterwards, as related, Matt. xxvii. 62—66. And St. Luke says, ch. xxiii. 52—56, "That Joseph having begged the body of Jesus, took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man was laid—— And "the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how the body was laid." Or, as in Dr. Clarke's paraphrase, 'And the women of Galilee, who had stood at a distance, seeing 'the crucifixion, followed the body of their Lord, when it was taken away, and observed where 'Joseph laid it.'

To imagine therefore, that these women knew nothing of what had been done by Joseph and Nicodemus, is to suppose them extremely negligent about an object that engaged all their attention. I am not for obviating, or removing difficulties, by denying any parts of a history that are manifest. Nor do I recollect one Commentator who has been of opinion, that these good women were unacquainted with the embalming of our Lord's body, so far as it had been done, before he was laid in the sepulchre.

[c] Matt. xxvii. 57—60. Mark xv. 42—46. Luke xxiii. 50—53.

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We may conceive of the case in this manner. When Pilate, at the request of the Jews, had given leave, "that the legs of the two malefactors might be broken," for hastening their death, and "that they might be taken away:" and when, at the request of Joseph of Arimathea, Pilate had also given leave "for taking away the body of Jesus;" the crucifixion was over, and the crowd would disperse. And the women, who before had stood at some distance, would come nearer. They must have been exceedingly solicitous about the disposal of the body of their beloved Lord, as no preparations had been made for his burial. And the coming of Joseph and Nicodemus, with their attendants, bringing a fine linen cloth, and rollers or bandages, and myrrh and aloes, must have afforded them much satisfaction. When the body was taken down from the cross, they would follow those who carried it away. Nor would they lose sight of the body, or at least of those who took care of it. They were not now agents, but spectators, or standers-by. But they would be as near to those, who were employed in embalming the body, or in swathing it with rollers, as they could be, without interrupting them. And it may be well supposed, that Joseph and Nicodemus, and their attendants, whether their own servants, or perfumers and apothecaries, would be civil to them, and not be at all offended at the respect which they showed to Jesus.

Where the precious body was washed from the blood of the wounds, and embalmed, and wrapped up in the rollers, may not be easy for us to say: whether in a shed, or lodge of the garden, or in the sepulchre itself, or before the door, at the entrance of it. But this last seems to me as likely as any. Wherever it was done, the women were near the place, and saw, or at least knew what was done. "They sat over against the sepulchre, and saw where, and how the body was laid:" and that a great stone was rolled at the door of it.

After which they went away: and when the sabbath was over, they bought spices, and came with them to the sepulchre early on the first day of the week. The reason of their so doing is differently assigned by learned Commentators.

Grotius [a] and Beza [b] were of opinion, that our Lord's body was not anointed or embalmed: that is, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, did not make use of the spices, but laid them by in the sepulchre, intending to come again to complete the embalming. Lampe [c] does not approve of that account. Nevertheless he is obliged to own, that [d] what was now performed, was done in haste. As Lucas Brugensis is not in many hands, I shall transcribe a part of what he says, for showing what these good women aimed at by their kind [e] offices. And I shall refer to Theophylact, [f] who speaks to the like purpose.

What these women intended to do, we cannot say particularly. Nor can it be reasonably expected that we should be able to determine: because it cannot be supposed, that any now are fully acquainted with the various methods of embalming among the Jews, or the whole process of their embalming. But that there was somewhat wanting, somewhat left to be done by respectful and affectionate friends, may be argued from the shortness of time, and great haste, in which our Lord was embalmed and buried: and likewise from the concurring concern of several women, who may be justly supposed to have been as attentive, and as discreet, and understanding, as any of their sex. And it has seemed to me, that our Lord foresaw, that, for want of opportunity, there would happen a defect in that respect, which might otherwise have been shown him at his death.

Of the woman that anointed Jesus at Bethany with precious ointment, he said to those who

[a] 'Cum aromatibus.'] Non unxerunt, ob temporis angustias, sed aromata apposuerunt, uncturi primo commodo tempore. Grot. in Jo. xix. 40.

[b] Non est tamen pollinctum Christi cadaver, mulieribus alioqui non accessuris post alterum diem ad illud ungendum. Sed tumultuarie fuit, propter instantem, et quasi jam præsentem parasceven, in illo monumento proximo civitati positum, cum aromatibus a Nicodemo allatis, dilatâ in alterum a sepulto diem integrâ funeris pollincturâ Bez. in loc.

[c] Leviora sane sunt, quibus persuadere vult, Dominici corporis unctionem quidem susceptam esse, sed non datam executioni. Lampe in Jo T. III. p 644.

[d] Prius nullius est momenti, quia raptim et festinanter Jesum esse unctum, facile concedimus. Id. ib.

[e] 'Emerunt' a pharmacopolis 'aromata,' vi exsiccandi et fragrantiam addendi prædita—— ut 'ungerent' Jesum mortuum—— Neque vero ignorabant, corpus Jesu a Nicodemo non parce unctum fuisse, centum inquam libris myrrhæ et aloës, quæ præsentes adfuerant, cum ungeretur, quamquam forte suis oculis non viderant. Sed habebat consuetudo, ut carissima capita, et quæ plurimi fierent cadavera, non semel tantum ungerentur, sed sæpius, pluribusque continuis diebus, donec exsiccato, et absorpto vi aromatum omni reliquo humore, imo tabefactâ carne aridâ, et quasi æneâ redditâ, diu servari possent integra, et immunia a putrefactione, &c. Vid. Gen. L. 23. Luc. Brug. in Marc. xvi.

[f] Theoph. in Marc. xvi. 1.

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were uneasy at the expence: Matt. xxvi. 12. "For in that she hath poured this ointment upon my body, she did it for my burial," προς το ενταφιασαι με. Mark xiv. 8. "She has done what she could. She is come before hand, to anoint my body to the burial." εις τον ενταφιασμον. John xii. 7. "Let her alone. Against the day of my burying has she kept this." εις την ημεραν τυ ενταφιασμυ μυ.

But learned interpreters say, that [a] the original word, made use of by all the Evangelists, does not so properly denote burial, as the preparations made for burial, and particularly, the costly preparations made for persons of distinction.

The meaning therefore is: "In that she has poured this ointment upon my body, she has done it," as it were, "for my embalming," or to embalm me. And this part of our Lord's apology for that pious woman may be paraphrased in this manner, as indeed it was [b] formerly: 'You may 'consider this anointing as an embalming of me. And it may so happen, that neither she, nor 'any others, shall have an opportunity to lay out all the rich spices and ointments upon me, when 'dead, which they may be disposed to make use of.'

CHAP. V.

PAGE 155. Diss. xxxvii. 'Whom are we to understand by the Grecians and Hebrews mentioned,' Acts vi. 1.

It will be worth the while to put down here the words of the text at length. "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

I am of opinion, that by Hebrews are meant native Jews, descendants of Abraham and Israel, and that by Grecians are meant proselytes to the Jewish religion. This I shall endeavour to make out by an induction of particulars, and by numerous quotations from the Old Testament.

Ebrew, or Hebrew. It is a very honourable, and the most ancient denomination of the Jewish people. Abraham himself is called "a Hebrew," or "the Hebrew," Gen. xiv. 13. as is Joseph in Egypt, Gen. xxxix. 14, 17. chap. xli. 12. The Hebrews are mentioned more than once in his history. Gen. xl. 15. and xliii. 32. In particular, the country inhabited by Jacob and his family, whence Joseph is brought, is called "the land of the Hebrews," Gen. xl. 15. God himself, when he sent Moses to deliver the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, took upon himself this title and character, "The Lord God of the Hebrews," Ex. iii. 18. Which character is often mentioned in the accounts of Moses's appearances before Pharaoh. Ex. v. 3. vii. 16. ix. 1. x. 3.

I do not now inquire into the origin of this name, though the disquisition might be curious. I had rather, for the sake of brevity, refer to [c] others. Whatever was the origin of the name, it was early known, and seems to have been peculiar to Abraham and his descendants, by Isaac and Jacob, when Moses was sent to conduct the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt. And "the Lord God of the Hebrews," and "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," are used as equivalent. Ex. iii. 6, 15, 16, 18. iv. 5.

It was a common denomination of the children of Israel, when they dwelt in Egypt: And

[a] 'Ad funerandum me:' προς το ενταφιασαι με. Vulg. et Erasmus, 'ad me sepeliendum,' male. Nam aliud est θαπτειν, quam ενταφιαζειν: ut Latinis sepelire est sepulcro condere: funerare vero pollincire, cadaver sepulcro mandandum, prius curare, &c. Bez. ad Matt. xxvi. 12.

—— Habet me jam quasi pro mortuo, atque officium illud solemne modico tantum tempore antevertit. Hunc sensum apertissime significat Marcus voce προελαβε. Hic το ενταφιασαι, pollincire, interpretandum est per ελλειψιν voculæ, ωσει tanquam: 'fecit quasi ad me pollinciendum.' Quam vocula prudenter hic, ut et in hac apud Marcum historia addidit Syrus interpres. Et Johanni ημερα ενταφιασμυ est dies quasi pollincturæ. Grot. in Matt. xxvi. 12.

[b] See p. 230.

[c] Vid. Bochart. Geo. S. P. i. l. 2. c. 14. Scalig. Not. in Græca Eusebii. p. 410. Voss. de Orig. Idol. l. 3. c. 44. p. 356. Br. Walton Proleg. iii. Huet. Dem. Ev. Prop. iv. cap. 13. Jo. Cleric. Comm. in Gen. x. 21. xiv. 13. et Disserta. de Ling. Hebr.

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"the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives"——And he said: "When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, if it be a son, ye shall kill him——And the midwives said unto Pharaoh——because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women," Ex. i. 15, 16, 19. When Pharaoh's daughter found Moses, she said: "This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister unto Pharaoh's daughter: Shall I go, and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women?" Ex. ii. 6, 7. Afterwards, "when Moses was grown, he went out unto his brethren, and espied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren——[And] when he went out the second day, behold two men of the Hebrews strove together," ver. 11—13.

Hebrew, or Hebrews, is often used in the first book of Samuel, as equivalent to Israelites, or the people of Israel. 1 Sam. iv. 6, 9. xiii. 3, and elsewhere.

When the mariners in the ship said to Jonah, i. 8, 9. "What is thy occupation? and whence camest thou? What is thy country? and of what people art thou? He said unto them: I am an Hebrew. And I fear the Lord God of heaven, which made the sea and the dry land."

This denomination is seldom found in the later books of the Old Testament. However, it is in Jeremiah, ch. xxxiv. The place is remarkable, and will be of use to us in the present inquiry. "This is the word, that came unto Jeremiah from the Lord——That every man should let his man-servant, and every man his maid-servant, being a Hebrew or Hebrewess, go free: that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother——Then they obeyed, and let them go. Afterwards they caused them to return, and brought them into subjection for servants, and for handmaids——Therefore the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying: Thus saith the God of Israel: I made a covenant with your fathers, saying: At the end of seven years, let ye go every man his brother, an Hebrew, which has been sold unto thee——."

Let us therefore observe the laws, which are here referred to. Ex. xxi. 2, "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve thee: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing." Deut. xv. 12. "If thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee." Lev. xxv. 44—46. "Both thy bond-men, and thy bond-maids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen, [or the nations] that are round about thee. Of them shall ye buy bond-men, and bond-maids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they beget in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them for an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession. They shall be your bond-men for ever. But over your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule one over another with rigour."

"By strangers sojourning among them," I understand proselytes, men circumcised after the manner of the Mosaic law. We here therefore see the great difference between the children of Israel, or native Jews and strangers, or proselytes. And in speaking of this matter, for preventing ambiguity, the words Hebrew and Hebrewess are used by Jeremiah, as certainly denoting the descendants of Abraham and the other patriarchs.

In the laws, just transcribed from the books of Moses, there are clearly mentioned three sorts of persons: "Hebrews, [or] Children of Israel," that is, native Jews: then "strangers sojourning among them," or proselytes: lastly, "heathens," that is, the nations, or Gentiles. The prophet demands liberty after six years servitude for the first only, not for any of the others. The law of Moses did not empower him to do more. And the command of God, by the prophet, certainly, is agreeable to his own laws, first delivered by the hand of Moses.

I shall just observe, as we go along, that Josephus says of himself, he[a] was a Hebrew by birth. And Eusebius says of Moses, that[b] he was a great divine, and a Hebrew of Hebrews. He also observes the antiquity of this name, and says, that[c] Joseph was a Hebrew of Hebrews, but there were yet no Jews. Which is very true. For the people of Israel were not called Jews, till[d] about the time of the Babylonish captivity. After that, a man of any nation, who embraced the religion of the Jews, and was circumcised after the manner of Moses, became a Jew. But he never could be a Hebrew, that denomination being peculiar to the descendants of the ancient patriarchs.

[a] —— γενει Ἑβραιος. De B. J. l. i. pr. 1.

[b] Ὁ τοινυν μεγας θεολογος Μωσης, Ἑβραιος ων εξ Ἑβραιων, ει και τις αλλος. κ. λ. Pr. Ev. 7. c. 7. p. 305.

[c] Πλην αλλα και ουτος Ἑβραιος, εξ Ἑβραιων, εγω δε Ιουδαιος, ὁτι μηδε ην πω τα Ιουδαιων. Ib. cap. 8. p. 312.

[d] Josephus dates the origin of this name after their return from the Babylonish captivity. Ant. l. 11. v. 7.

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There are three places in the New Testament where this title is found. One is that of the text under consideration. Another is 2 Cor. xi. 22. "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I." The third is Philip. iii. 5. "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews." He was circumcised the eighth day; which is a proof, he was born of parents, who were themselves Jews, and punctually obeyed the law of Moses. However this might have been, and he have been no more than the child of a proselyte: He therefore proceeds, and says, he was of "the stock of Israel," or the seed of Jacob: and particularly, "of the tribe of Benjamin," an honoured tribe, upon divers accounts, particularly, as Benjamin was one of the sons of Jacob by Rachel, his wife, as she[a] is styled in the catalogue of Jacob's family, which went into Egypt: but especially as this tribe had, in a great measure, preserved itself from idolatry. "An Hebrew of the Hebrews," or rather, "an Hebrew of Hebrews:" meaning, that he was himself a Hebrew, and descended from Hebrews.

As Paul was a Hebrew, though born out of Judea, at Tarsus in Cilicia, where the Greek tongue was used, we are fully assured, that by the Grecians, cannot be meant Jews, who used the Greek language.

From all these texts, therefore, now alleged from the Old and New Testament, it appears, the denomination, or character, of Hebrew, is the privilege of birth, not of choice, or acquisition, or accidental circumstance. All descendants of Abraham the Hebrew, by Isaac and Jacob, wherever they are born, and whatever language they use, are Hebrews. Nor can any other men be Hebrews, but only they who are descended from Abraham.

This, then, is the first consideration, tending to determine who these Grecians were. To whom we now proceed.

Grecians, or Hellenists, as in the original. The word Grecians occurs thrice in our English version of the New Testament: here, and ch. ix. 29. and xi. 20. But it is well known to the learned, that in the second of these places the Alexandrian MS. has Greeks: which also is the reading in the third text, not only in the Alexandrian manuscript, but likewise in the Latin Vulgate, and several other versions. Whatever are the readings, it is apparent, that the same persons are not intended in the third and last text, as in the two former.

Various[b] have been the sentiments of learned men concerning the Grecians, mentioned here, and in ch. ix. 29. The most prevailing opinions are these two. Some hereby understand Jews born out of Judea, who spake Greek, and used the Greek version of the Old Testament in their synagogues. The other opinion is, that these Grecians were proselytes, or men of other nations, who had embraced the Jewish religion.

That the former are not here intended, has been, as I apprehend, sufficiently shown already. I therefore go on to support farther the opinion, that these Grecians were proselytes.

Which, I think, may be argued from the neglect they had met with. There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected, παρεθεωρουντο, were overlooked, passed by, omitted,[c] in the daily ministration. There was no regard had to them. There were no allowances or distributions made to them.

This may have been owing to two reasons, because they were few in number, and because they were despised. There may be some reason to think it was chiefly owing to this last.

The Jews of this time knew very well how to pay respect to proselytes of distinction, as they did to Helena, queen of the Adiabenes, and her son Izates. But for the most part native Jews, descendants of Abraham and the patriarchs, must have been preferred to proselytes. I cannot conceive any reason why any Jews should have been neglected, barely because they were born out of Judea, and used the Greek language. But proselytes might be overlooked because they were reckoned much inferior to Israelites. Proselytes were[d] admitted to eat the passover, and to communion with Israelites in all religious privileges. But they were far from enjoying equal civil privileges with the children of Israel. This must be apparent from what was before alleged from the thirty-fourth chapter of Jeremiah, and parallel places.

[a] "The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin," Gen. xlvi. 19.

[b] Seven different opinions have been taken notice of by some learned writers. Vid. Fabr. Bib. Gr. l. 4. c. vi. T. III. p. 226. et Lux Evangelii. cap. iv. p. 59, 60. et Wolf Curæ ad Act. vi. 1.

[c] Παρεθεωρουντο.] 'despicerentur,' id est, negligerentur, et contemnerentur. Joach. Camer. in loc.

[d] See Ex. xii 48, 49. Numb. ix. 14. and other places.

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I beg leave to take notice of some other things relating to them from the Old Testament. When the Gibeonites had beguiled Joshua, and the elders, and their deceit was known, "all the congregation murmured against the princes:" however, as they had "made a league with them, to let them live, and the princes of the congregation had sworn to them," they would not falsify their oath. They gave them their lives, but took from them their lands, and made them slaves, or little better. As it is said Josh. ix. 26, 27, "Joshua delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not. And he made them hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord."

And we are told, "that Saul sought to slay them," or endeavoured to extipate them, in "his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah," 2 Sam. xxi. 2. Which shows, that they were not beloved, and that this zeal of Saul was popular. But it was resented in the time of David.

This sort of men were employed in the laborious works for building the temple. 1 Chr. xxi. 2. "And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel. And he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God." And 2 Chr. ii. 17, 18. "And Solomon[a] numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering, wherewith David his father had numbered them. And they were found an hundred and fifty thousand, and three thousand, and six hundred. And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountains, and three thousand and six hundred overseers, to set the people to work."

The overseers I suppose to have been Israelites, the rest strangers or proselytes; as they are called in the Greek version of the Seventy, and in St. Jerom's Latin version. Many of these strangers may have been remains of the Gibeonites; but I presume there were others besides.

Nethinims are mentioned, 1 Chr. ix. 2. "Now the first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions, in their cities, were the Israelites, the Priests, the Levites, and the Nethinims." They, and Solomon's servants, are often mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. In the catalogue of the people that returned from Babylon it is said, Ezr. ii. 58. "All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, were three hundred and ninety and two." So also Neh. vii. 60. and Ezr. viii. 20. "Also the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty."

These Nethinims had been given the Levites, to serve them. Afterwards Solomon appointed more for the like service. These must have been strangers or proselytes. It is not to be thought that David, or Solomon, or any king of Israel, with the elders, had power to give Israelites to the service of the Levites. As some Jews said to our Lord: "We be Abraham's seed, and never were in bondage to any man," John viii. 33. No, they were free-born, and high-born, in comparison of other men; though they were little concerned for the freedom of which our Lord was speaking. Says Patrick upon 2 Chr. ix. 2. 'Ezra gives a good account of the Nethi-'nims, ch. viii. 20, where he informs us, they were given by David to the Levites (which is the 'original of their name:) as the Levites were given by God to help the priests: and therefore 'in all places they are mentioned with holy persons.'

I do not know whether these men may be called inferior clergy. They seem rather to have been servants to them. But however mean their original, or low and laborious their employment may have been; the people of Israel were indebted to them for their zeal for the house of God. Many of them readily returned from Babylon to Judea, and performed their part for upholding the worship of God at his temple.

As all the land of Canaan was given to the twelve tribes, the children of Israel, and many of the regulations in the law of Moses were in their favour; it was foreseen, that strangers, who joined themselves to them, and came to sojourn among them, would lie under some disadvantage. God therefore, who wisely made those appointments of the law of Moses, regarding the descendants of Jacob, in his great goodness, made provisions likewise for strangers, that they might not be abused.

The people of Israel, to whom the laws of Moses were delivered, are charged in this manner. Ex. xxii. 20. "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Comp. Lev. xix. 33, 34. and Ex. xxiii. 12. "Six days shalt thou do thy

[a] Και συνηγαγε Σαλωμον παντας τους ανδρας τους προσηλυτους, τους εν γη Ισραηλ. κ. λ.. LXX.

[b] Numeravit igitur Salomon omnes viros proselytos, qui erant in terrâ Israël. Hieron.

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work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thy ox and thy ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed:" see there ver. 9. Lev. xix. 9, 10. "And when ye reap the harvest of your land——thou shalt not gather the gleaning of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard. Thou shalt leave them for the poor, and the stranger. I am the Lord your God." See also Lev. xxv. 5, 6. and 38. and Deut. xvi. 13, 14. "Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine. And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow that are in thy gates." And again, very particularly, Deut. xxvi. 11—13. "And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing, which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thy house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you. When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thy increase——and hast given it unto the Levite, and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled. Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God: I have brought away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, according to thy commandment." These instances of kindness are strongly enforced, Deut. x. 17—19.

I shall add a text or two, somewhat different, though still to the like purpose. Deut. xii. 12. "And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God, ye and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and the Levite that is within your gates. Forasmuch as he has no part, nor inheritance with you." And ver. 18. "Thou must eat them before the Lord thy God, in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates." See also Deut. x. 9.

By "stranger," [and "stranger within thy gates, and the stranger that sojourneth with thee, [or] in thy land," I always understand proselytes, men circumcised according to the law of Moses: or, as they are now often called, "proselytes of the covenant, [or] of righteousness." If the Levites are said "to have no inheritance," and are styled "Levites within thy gates," as they are in some texts just cited, though there were allotted to them cities, with their suburbs, out of the inheritance of the other tribes, as is manifest from Numb. xxxv. 1—8. and Josh. xiv. 1—5. all strangers, though circumcised, and admitted to full communion in all religious ordinances, may well be called "sojourners, and the strangers within thy gates."

Once more. As God, in his laws, delivered to the children of Israel, was not unmindful of the stranger: so likewise does David remember them in his devotions. Ps. cxv. 9—13. "O Israel, trust thou in the Lord. O house of Israel, trust thou in the Lord. Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord. The Lord will bless the house of Israel: he will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great," cxviii. 2—4. "Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let them that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever." Ps. cxxxv. 19, 20. "Bless the Lord, O house of Israel. Bless the Lord, O house of Aaron. Bless the Lord, O house of Levi. Ye that fear the Lord, bless the Lord."

These men, who fear the Lord, mentioned after all the divisions of the people of Israel, I suppose to have been strangers, or proselytes. Hereby we are led to understand St. Paul's address in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia. Acts xiii. 16. "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." And ver. 26. "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent." Here, by them that feared God, must be meant proselytes. For that none were present, but such as were Jews, either by birth or religion, appears from ver. 42. and what there follows.

Proselytes are mentioned among the hearers of St. Peter's first sermon, preached at Jerusalem, after our Lord's ascension. Acts ii. 10. I suppose, proselytes to be meant by Grecians here, ch. vi. 1. and ix. 29.

Who they were, we cannot say exactly. But there might be many such men in Judea, and in other countries all over the world, where the Jewish people resided. Some of them may have been descendants of such as had joined themselves to the people of Israel in former times: and others may have been new converts to the Jewish religion.

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I have imagined, that proselytes now living in Judea, who were poor, may have been chiefly, or for the most part, servants of the Roman governors, or of their officers: who having come into Judea with their masters, were converted to the Jewish religion: and, when their masters returned home, got leave to stay behind. Having renounced gentilism, they could not expect very agreeable treatment from their friends and relatives at home. And though they had not the prospect of any considerable advantage in Judea, yet they might hope for civilities among those, whose religion they had embraced. Besides, new converts have a great deal of zeal. Some of them might conceive a particular affection for the land of Israel, and the city of Jerusalem, where was the temple.

Beside these servants of Roman officers, who had resided in Judea, probably, there were others, who had served Jews out of Judea: who, having for some reasons left their masters, chose to come, and seek subsistence in Judea, not being willing to serve heathens.

There might be also divers other persons of different stations, who being converted to Judaism, preferred Jerusalem to all other places.

Nicolas, chosen to be one of the seven, a proselyte of Antioch, now at Jerusalem, was, very probably, a man of good substance. And it is observable, that Helena, queen of the Adiabenes, not long after her conversion went to [a] Jerusalem. And she must have often visited that city, or resided there very much. For she was there, when her son Izates [b] died. And several of the brothers, and sons of Izates [c] were shut in at the last siege of Jerusalem.

That therefore is my third and last argument, that these Grecians were proselytes: forasmuch as upon their complaints a proselyte was chosen to be one of the seven, to preside in the daily ministration, even Nicolas of Antioch. The rest, I presume, were Hebrews, that is, Jews by birth, descendants of the patriarchs. Some of whom may have been born in Judea, others of them out of it, but were now at Jerusalem.

It is not sufficient reason to believe that any of the rest were proselytes, or that all the rest were Jews, who were born in other countries, because their names are Greek. For several of our Saviour's disciples had Greek names, though they were all men of Galilee: as Philip, and Andrew, and Thomas called Didymus, and Simon, called also Cephas, and Peter, by which last name he was generally called, and best known.

That Stephen was a Jew by birth, is highly probable from the whole of his speech before the council, and particularly from the beginning of it. Acts vii. 2. "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia."

Philip, the second of the seven, was a person of great eminence, who preached the gospel in Samaria, and wrought there many miracles. Acts viii. 1—5. Who also converted the chamberlain, and treasurer of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. There cannot be any reason to make a doubt, whether Philip, so eminent an evangelist, of an order next in authority and dignity to Christ's apostles, was of the seed of Israel. It would be altogether absurd to suppose, that one so early employed in such signal services for promoting the gospel, was only a proselyte.

When the Eunuch had been baptized, "the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the Eunuch saw him no more. But Philip was found at Azotus; and passing through, he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea," ver. 39, 40. There he seems to have settled. For there he was, when St. Paul came to Jerusalem in the year fifty-eight, as we learn from Acts xxi. 8—10. "And the next day we came to Cæsarea. And we entered into the house of Philip, the evangelist, which was one of the seven, and abode there."

Stephen suffered martyrdom soon after he was chosen. Philip likewise, as we perceive, not long after removed from Jerusalem. Indeed, the seven seem to have been appointed upon occasion of a particular emergency. However, the other five, or some of them, may have stayed at Jerusalem, and may have continued to officiate in the service, to which they had been appointed. And moreover, others may have been chosen in the room of Stephen, who died, and of Philip, who removed.

Dr. Whitby upon Acts vi. 1. objects against our opinion from ch. ix. 29. where it is said,

[a] Jos. Ant. l. 20. ii. 6. [b] Ib. iii. 3. [c] De B. J. l. 6. vi. 4.

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"That Paul disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him." 'Which, as he 'argues, shows they must be Jews by birth, and not only strangers of other nations come hither. 'For how dared they to kill a Jew among the Jews, without bringing him to their tribunals?'

Which is an argument of no moment. For I presume, that neither had a Jew by birth a right to assassinate a man without any trial. And, generally, such things must have been disliked. But a proselyte might attempt it as well as another. And considering, how unpopular a person Paul now was, the killing him might be passed by, and overlooked, or even approved of, by whomsoever it was done. Proselytes were as likely, as any men, to be bigoted in their sentiments, and to practise violence against those who differed from them. What sort of men most of the proselytes of that time were, may be concluded from what our Lord said to the pharisees without reserve. Matt. xxiii. 15. But there were some of a better temper, who believed in Jesus after his resurrection, and joined themselves to his apostles, when the profession of his name must have exposed them to difficulties.

To me it seems, that there is great propriety in St. Luke's style, calling the Jews, who were of the seed of Israel, Hebrews, and proselytes, Hellenists, Grecians, or, perhaps Hellenes, Greeks, from their origin. For I have sometimes been much inclined to think that to be the true reading in this text, as well as in the rest. And Dr. Ward says, p. 155. 'That the word 'Ελληνισται, Hellenists, is used only by St. Luke in this book, and is not perhaps to be found in 'any other writer so ancient.' Indeed, I believe, it is not to be found in Josephus. And the uncommonness of the word may cause a suspicion, that it is the invention of some Christian; though it is ancient. For, in this text, it is in the Alexandrian manuscript. And the word may be seen in [a] Chrysostom.

Any, who are pleased to consider all that was before said, concerning the word Hebrew, are able to judge, whether there is not some special propriety in St. Luke's style, according to this interpretation. A Hebrew, denoting a Jew by ancient descent, must be fitly opposed to Grecians, or Greeks, thereby understanding proselytes, who were Jews, by religion only, and not by birth.

The opinion, for which I argue, has been espoused by many learned men, as [b] Beza, [c] Basnage, and [d] Pearson. Which last has asserted it with great strength, and neatness, in a few words. Insomuch, that it may be thought somewhat strange, that this opinion has not been generally received, without farther dispute. I have enlarged, being desirous to establish and illustrate it to the best of my power.

CHAP. VI.

PAGE 159. Diss. xxxviii. 'The term Holy Ghost, in the New Testament, denotes both a person and a power.'

P. 159. 'That it often denotes a power, cannot be questioned, as where the apostles and 'other Christians at that time, are said to be filled with the Holy Ghost. But that it signifies also 'a person, seems evident from the following passages among others.'

That Dissertation concludes in this manner, p. 161. 'We meet with χαρισμα Θεȣ, "the gift of 'God," Rom. vi. 23. and χαρισμα Χριςȣ, the "gift of Christ," 2 Tim i. 6. according to some 'copies: though others have it Θεȣ, "the gift of God," as it is in our version. And agreeably 'to all analogy χαρισματα Αγιȣ Πνευματος must signify "the gifts of the Holy Spirit," in a per'sonal sense: since that word is never used otherwise, but of persons in the New Testament, 'where the donor is mentioned.'

[a] In Act. Ap. hom. 14, p. 111. tom. IX.

[b] In Act. 1.

[c] Ann. 35. p. vii.

[d] Hic autem 'Ελληνισται opponuntur 'Εβραιοις——Neque enim Hebræi, neque Judæi erant, hoc est, genere: non Hebræi ex Hebræis——Sed Judæi tantum religione, id est, proselyti. Hi igitur proselyti, cum, antequam circumciderentur, 'Ελληνες, sive Gentiles fuerint, etsi jam religione facti Judæi, et totius legis impletionem in se suscipientes, tamen a Judæis seu Hebræis, stirpe et genere ab Abrahamo deducto superbientibus, inferiori loco habebantur. Unde neglectus viduarum, et ex eo neglectu murmur, seu γογγυσμος των 'Ελληνιςον. Pearson Lect. 3. in Act. Apost. num. v.

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But for this last our author refers not to any text, as he does for the two former; because, I suppose, he found not any such text in the New Testament. Nor do I know of any.

This observation therefore is unsupported by proper authority, and is what one would not have expected in so accurate a writer as Dr. Ward. I think we ought here to recollect, that these Dissertations are posthumous.

But I have no intention to enter into an argument upon this subject. There [a] was an anonymous tract published not long ago, where it is treated more distinctly, to which I refer.

CHAP. VII.

PAGE 174. Diss. xlii. 'To whom the apostolic decree Acts xv. was directed. And whether it 'was perpetual.'

As this chapter will be of considerable length, I shall divide it into the following sections.

I. An introduction.

II. The Noachic precepts, with observations upon them.

III. To whom the apostolic decree was directed: and that there was but one sort of Jewish proselytes.

IV. General observations, showing the occasion, and design of the apostolic decree.

V. The several articles of the decree explained.

VI. Observations, in the manner of corollaries.

I. INTRODUCTION. Before I make any remarks upon this article, I would observe, that a good while ago, in the chapter of St. Cyprian,[b] I carefully considered the various readings of this decree, as it stands in the book of the Acts of the apostles, ch. xv. 20, 29, and xxi. 25. The result of which was, that the readings in our present copies of it, in the New Testament, are right. It was a long discussion. But I do not repent the labour of it. It has formerly, and does still afford satisfaction.

Says our learned author, p. 174. 'The decree is directed τοις αδελφοις εξ εθνων, that is, as 'seems most probable, to all the Heathen converts in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, who were not 'proselytes of the gate, before they embraced christianity. For the Jewish proselytes were always 'obliged to regard the things therein mentioned, as they were all contained in the precepts given 'to Noah. And therefore we do not find in Acts x. that Peter laid any such injunctions upon 'Cornelius, and his company.'

Dr. Ward, as seems to me, useth those words, "proselytes of the gate, and Jewish proselytes," very improperly. But of that more hereafter.

It may be proper to observe here, that the author of Miscellanea Sacra has advanced an opinion, not known before, that [c] the decree of the council of Jerusalem was directed to such converts to christianity only, as were "proselytes of the gate," and were, before their conversion to christianity, obliged to observe the several regulations contained in this decree. Which opinion has been embraced by several.

Dr. Ward does not differ much from them. He thinks that [d] such things, as were before required of "proselytes of the gate," were in the decree, enjoined upon all converts to christianity, in the countries above-mentioned. But, he says, there was no need of giving such injunctions to Cornelius, he having before observed the like things, as a "proselyte of the gate," living in Judea.

Upon this scheme I now make no remarks. I put down these things here at present, only by way of explication of our author's sentiment.

II. THE NOACHIC PRECEPTS. Dr. W—— in the words just cited, speaks of the precepts

[a] See the first postscript to a letter written in 1730, p. 116.
[b] Vol. II. p. 13—20.
[c] See Miscell. Sacra. Essay iv. However, see also Hammond upon Acts xv. 29.
[d] See Hammond as before referred to.

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given to Noah. And at p. 177. says, 'That the several things contained in the apostolic decree, 'are all included in the Noachic precepts.'

I therefore shall now show, what are called the seven precepts of Noah, or the sons of Noah, taking my account from Ainsworth, where I believe they are rightly represented. Which is more than can be said of some others, who talk much of them.

Says that exact and diligent writer, in his Annotations upon Gen. ix. 4. "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." 'The Hebrew doctors make this 'the seventh commandment given to the sons of Noah, which all nations were bound to keep, 'as there had been six from Adam's time. The first against idolatry, the worship of stars, 'images, &c. the second against blaspheming the name of God; the third against shedding of 'blood; the fourth against unjust carnal copulations, whereof they made six sorts: 1. with a 'man's own mother: 2. or with a father's wife: 3. or with his neighbour's wife: 4. or with his 'sister by the mother's side: 5. or with mankind: 6. or with beasts. The fifth precept was 'against rapine, or robbery. The sixth to have judgment, or punishment for malefactors. And 'unto Noah was added the seventh, which is here mentioned. Which they understand to forbid 'the eating of any member, or of the flesh of a beast, taken from it alive. Whosoever in the 'world transgressed any of these seven commandments wilfully, the Jews held, he was to be 'killed with the sword. But the Heathen, who would yield to obey these seven precepts, 'though they received not circumcision, nor observed the other ordinances given afterwards to 'Israel, they were suffered to dwell as strangers among the Israelites, and to dwell in their land.'

Upon all which I beg leave to make the several following observations.

First. Fornication is not mentioned among the several kinds of unjust carnal copulation. This omission has been observed by [a] Grotius. The reason of it, I do not stay to inquire.

Secondly. Every thing, here mentioned, is of a moral nature, even the seventh precept, as well as the rest. For it condemns cruelty. It is not, to forbear eating blood, but to eat the member, or the flesh of a beast taken from it alive. Which is great cruelty, and even barbarity.

Thirdly. This whole article, as seems to me, is a Jewish way of representing the law of nature, by which all men are obliged. For sons of Adam, and sons of Noah, comprehend the whole world. By the law of nature all are obliged. Jews and Christians, who are under a particular law of revelation, are not exempted from this law, and its several obligations: but are as much subject to it as other men.

Fourthly. As this scheme is the scheme of Jewish masters only, it need not to be received without examination. Rabbinical and Thalmudical writers may be of use. But they are not infallible. Indeed, I had rather learn Jewish antiquities from the scriptures, and such other Jewish writers, as lived before our Saviour's coming, or were contemporary with Christ and his apostles, than from later Jewish authors.

Fifthly. These precepts deliver a wrong interpretation of Gen. ix. 4. the command given to Noah, relating to food. They represent it to forbid the eating of any member, or of any flesh of a beast taken from it alive; which is a wrong account, as must be apparent to all. The words are: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." Or, as in Lev. xvii. 14. "Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh. For the life of all flesh is the blood thereof." And see Deut. xii. 23. And this law, as delivered to Noah, was understood by Josephus [b] to forbid the eating of blood. Which must induce us to believe, that this is a false, and late interpretation: and that this whole scheme of Noachical precepts is a modern thing. Several learned men have argued in the like manner.

Sixthly. If the Jewish doctors say, (as undoubtedly many Christian commentators now do:)

[a] Inter præcepta Adamo et Noæ data, Judæi non ponunt interdictum scortandi. Grot. in Act. xv. 20.

[b] 'Excepto quod carnem cum sanguine non comedetis.] Hebræi recentiores, et, ut credo, Christianorum odio, sentiunt vetari hic esum membri rapti de animali vivo——At certe vetustiores Hebræorum non ita interpretatos satis docet Josephus, qui ait, χωρις αιματος· εν τουτῳ, γαρ εστιν ἡ ψυχη. Quem sensum iisdem prope verbis hic expressit Rabbi Sardias, et quidem sequuntur non ignobiles Hebræorum magistri. Gro. ad Gen. ix. 4.

——Ita interpretatur et Josephus. Ant. l. i. cap. 3.

——At posteriores Rabbini inter præcepta Noacho data, quæ ad totum genus humanum pertinere ab iis putantur, hoc recensent, sensumque esse volunt, 'membrum animalis vi-'ventis non esse comedendum'——Sed hæc posterioris ævi commenta exigui sunt, ad expositionem horum librorum, usûs. Cleric. in Gen. ix. 4.

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that any people, who obeyed these seven precepts, though they received not circumcision, might dwell among the Israelites, and sojourn in their land: I presume, they are mistaken.

This I argue, 1. From the sixth of these precepts, to have judgment, or punishment for malefactors. Or, in other words, magistracy, for restraining excesses, inconsistent with the peace of society, and for punishing delinquents. How can any learned Christians suppose, that uncircumcised Gentiles were required, or allowed to have magistracy in the land of Israel? Nay, it cannot be supposed, that proselytes, or men circumcised after the law of Moses, living in the land of Israel, had magistrates of their own. Whilst the Jewish people were sui juris, their own masters, all civil privileges, in their country, were appropriated to the descendants of Jacob. The case was quite different afterwards when they were subject to the Romans, and especially, when they were reduced to the state of a Roman province: as they were after the removal of Archelaus, not many years after our Saviour's nativity.

Indeed, God was the law-giver, and the king of the Jewish people. He governed them after the death of Moses, first by judges, then by kings, of his own appointment: who were to govern the people committed to their charge, according to the laws, which himself had delivered by the hand of Moses.

2. It seems to me to be probable, that according to the law of Moses, no uncircumcised men could reside, or be stated inhabitants in the land of Israel. Or, as I expressed it some while ago.[a] 'It seems to me, that none but proselytes, or circumcised men, had the privilege of a 'settled abode, or residence there, that is, to sojourn in the land. However, I think, there 'must have been an exception for travellers passing through the country, even though they 'were idolaters, and also for some, whose traffic was needful, and therefore allowed. As Patrick 'says upon Deut. xiv. 21. There were some, called Nocherim, which we translate aliens: who 'were mere Gentiles, and not suffered to have an habitation among them, but only to come and 'go in their traffic among them.'

I shall now argue this point more distinctly from divers considerations.

In the first place, I argue it from the law of circumcision, as delivered to Abraham. For, as our Saviour himself said to the Jews of his time, "circumcision is not of Moses, but of the fathers." John vii. 22. The original law is in Gen. xvii. 11—14. "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. And it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and thee. And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you. Every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money, must needs be circumcised. And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant: and the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant." Afterwards ver. 23. "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house: and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin, in the self-same day, as God had commanded him." And see what follows to the end of ver. 27.

That is the law, which God gave to Abraham, and Moses afterwards delivered to the children of Israel, when they were multiplied, and were become a nation.

And the institution of the passover is to this purpose. Ex. xii. 43, 44. "This is the ordinance of the passover. There shall no stranger eat thereof." In the Heb. 'Every son of the 'stranger shall not eat thereof.' Gr. πας αλλογενης. 'But every man's servant that is bought with money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof.' And ver. 48. "When a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised. And then let him come near, and keep it."

Such laws must have made circumcision very general in that country.

When the oppression, which the Jewish people had laboured under, in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, was abated, and Mattathias had come out of his retirement[b] and had got a number of men about him; it is said, 1 Macc. ii. 45, 46. "Then Mattathias, and his friends, went round about, and pulled down the altars. And what children soever they found within the coast of Israel uncircumcised, those they circumcised valiantly:" that is, resolutely, strenuously, without scruple, being persuaded, that they had a right so to do.

[a] See Vol. III. ch. xviii. sect. II.

[b] See Prideaux Conn. year before Christ 165. vol. II. p. 182.

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Hyrcanus having conquered the Idumeans, in [a] the year before Christ, one hundred and twenty-nine, as [b] Josephus says, 'He permitted them to remain in the country, if they consented 'to be circumcised, and to observe the Jewish laws; which they engaged to do, rather than 'leave their country: and from that time they became Jews.'

Afterwards, in [c] the year before Christ, one hundred and six. 'Aristobulus, as we also 'learn from [d] Josephus, having subdued the Itureans, added a large part of their country to 'Judea, and obliged the inhabitants, if they would stay in that country, to be circumcised, and 'to live according to the laws of the Jews.'

I suppose, that this was done, because those countries were reckoned to be part of the land, which God had given to the children of Israel.

Seventhly. What has been just said under the foregoing particular, must needs render it probable, that by "the stranger, the stranger within thy gates, the stranger that sojourneth with thee," so often mentioned in the law of Moses, and other books of the Old Testament, are meant proselytes, men circumcised after the law of Moses.

Nevertheless I shall here farther add some other proof, which may be reckoned more particular and positive. The argument, which I now aim at is this. The same religious ordinances are given to the children of Israel, and to the strangers sojourning among them, and under the same penalties.

Lev. xvii. 8—10. "And thou shalt say unto them: Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt offering, or a sacrifice: and bringeth it not to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer it unto the Lord, even that man shall be cut off from among his people. And whatever man there shall be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people." Ver. 13. "And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth, and catcheth any beast, or fowl, that may be eaten, he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust." Ver. 15, 16. "And every soul that eateth that which died of itself, or that which was torn with beasts, whether he be one of your own country, or a stranger, he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and be unclean until the even. Then shall he be clean. But if he wash not himself, nor bathe his flesh, then he shall bear his iniquity."

I might add other texts. But these appear to be sufficient. These prohibitions are delivered equally to the children of Israel, and to strangers that sojourned with them. And the penalty of transgression is that of being "cut off from his people." Therefore this sojourning stranger was one, who had joined himself to the house of Israel, or the Jewish people, by circumcision. Otherwise he could not have been cut off from them. I do not now quote any more places at length. But I would refer to Numb. xv. 13—16, and 25—31.

Eighthly. If observing the above-mentioned precepts of the sons of Noah qualified men to reside in the land of Israel: I presume, it must have been lawful for Jews to converse with them: and that they might do so, without contracting any legal impurity.

Nevertheless St. Peter was shy of conversing with Cornelius of Cesarea. When he came to his house, he told him, and his company, "they knew, how it was an unlawful thing, for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." Acts x. 28. And when St. Peter was come back to Jerusalem, "they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying: Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them," ch. xi. 2, 3.

Of that centurion it is said, "that he feared God, with all his house, that he gave much alms to the people, and that he prayed to God always." Cornelius therefore was not a transgressor of any of the precepts of the sons of Noah. He was not an idolater, nor a blasphemer, nor unjust and rapacious: nor did he indulge himself in the practice of abominable filthiness. And yet, we see, from authentic evidence, that it was not lawful for a Jew to converse with him. Indeed, he lived at Cæsarea, a part of the land of Israel. But so did many idolaters, at that time, under the Romans. It was not then in the power of the Jews to exclude any men, who were admitted by their masters.

[a] Prid. as before, p. 307. [b] Antiq. l. 13. c. ix. sect. 1. [c] Prid. p. 370. [d] Antiq. l. 13. cap. xi. 3.

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Once more, ninthly, the seven precepts of Noah, or the sons of Noah, can afford no help for explaining the regulations of the council at Jerusalem. For there is no resemblance between them. Nor have they any relation to each other. The Noachic precepts are all of the moral kind, as was shown just now: those of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, are, all of them, things indifferent, as will be shown hereafter.

And, if the seven precepts of Noah are an invention of modern Jews: as some learned men of the best understanding [a] have argued: it is great pity, that so much regard has been shown to them by Christians, who profess a zeal for truth, and are desirous to know the right interpretation of the scriptures. Though they are pompously called precepts of Adam and Noah, as if they had been delivered to the first man that lived on this earth, and to him who escaped the deluge, from whom all who have since lived on this earth are descended: they are, in this system and collection, a modern invention, and were unknown to Christ's apostles. We might as well attempt to explain the scriptures by the decrees of the council of Trent, or the synod of Dort, as the apostolic decree by these seven precepts.

III. THAT THERE WAS BUT ONE SORT OF JEWISH PROSELYTES. I have spoken my mind concerning the Noachic precepts. I should now proceed to consider the first question, proposed by our Author at the head of this Dissertation. To whom the apostolic decree was directed.

But this question I have answered [b] formerly. It was directed to all Gentile converts whatever. The letter is inscribed Acts xv. 23. "to the brethren, which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia." To them the Epistle was inscribed, to them it was sent, and to them it was delivered by the messengers, who carried it from Jerusalem. And afterwards. Acts xvi. 1—4. When Paul and Silas left Antioch, "they came to Derbe, and Lystra—And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep, that were ordained by the apostles and elders, which were at Jerusalem." And that the decree was designed for all Gentiles, appears from the words of St. James, who proposed it: ver. 19. "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God." And long after this, when St. Paul was come again to Jerusalem, the same James, the residing apostle in that city, says to him, ch. xxi. 25. "As touching the Gentiles, which believe, we have written, and concluded."

And from the beginning all Christians every where, for a good while, supposed themselves to be bound by them, and did observe them, as we know from many ancient authors *still* extant. But since the fourth century, they have been little regarded by those Christians, who [c] used the Latin tongue.

Moreover, I did formerly [d] allege a passage of Mr. Hallett, arguing very clearly, and strongly to the like purpose.

I did likewise at that time argue, that [e] there never were, in ancient times, among the Jews, two sorts of proselytes: and that all those men, who, in the Old Testament, are called proselytes, or strangers, or strangers within thy gates, were men circumcised. I have here added more arguments to the same purpose in the observations upon the Noachic precepts.

I must therefore entreat those learned men, who say, the regulations of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem were sent to uncircumcised Gentiles, whom they call proselytes of the gate, to give some better proof, that there were such men, than they have yet done. Otherwise, I must still think their scheme chimerical, and without foundation.

They are the more obliged to do this, because upon many other occasions, they bring in those half-proselytes, in their explications of the scriptures.

[a] I desire the reader to look back to p. 495, note [b]. I add here the judgments of others.

Mihi dubiæ sublestæque fidei videtur quidquid Judæi de his Noachidarum præceptis, eorumque antiquitate et origine tradant——Nam si Adamo in paradiso, vel Noachi filiis, fuerunt mandata; cur de iis in sacris literis, et Josephi scriptis, est silentium? D. Salom. Deyling. Observation. Sacrar. P. secund. &c. Obser. 38. sect. ix. p. 465. &c.

——'peregrinus tuus, qui in portis tuis.'] LXX. Int. ὁ προσηλυτος ὁ παροικων εν σοι. Notum quidem est, quid Rabbini de proselytis sentiant, quidve olim ab Hebræis veteribus ex iis postulatum fuisse existiment. Sed cum multa aut prorsus fingunt, aut ex sui ævi moribus judicent, tutum non est iis omnia credere. Cleric. in Ex. xx. 10.

'And indeed the modern Rabbins are of small authority 'in all such matters of remote antiquity.' Whiston, note [c] upon Josephus, of the Jewish War, B. VI. ch. v. 3.

[b] See Vol. III. ch. xviii.

[c] See the chapter of St. Cyprian, before referred to, vol. II.

[d] See vol. III. ch. xviii.

[e] The same.

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To call any uncircumcised men Jewish proselytes, as our learned author does here, though such men are never called proselytes in the New Testament: nor, as I think, in the Old: is unwarrantable, and unbecoming men, who profess to be inquirers after truth. [a]

An uncircumcised proselyte appears to me to be as truly an impropriety, and contradiction, as an uncircumcised Jew. For a proselyte is a Jew by religion, though not by birth.

I am arguing with my late learned friend whose Dissertations are before me. But I ought to be understood to argue with all others, who have adopted the same sentiment.

It is not to be expected, that I should repeat here what I said [b] formerly. But, if I could contribute any thing farther toward clearing up this point, I should willingly add a few more observations.

I then [c] said. 'I did not believe, that the notion of two sorts of Jewish proselytes can be 'found in any Christian writer, before the fourteenth century, or later.'

I shall now add. I cannot at present say certainly, which is the most ancient commentator, in whom I have met with it: whether Cardinal Cajetan, or Alphonsus Tostatus, or another. For I cannot now refer to the place. I either made no written extract, or have lost it. But I well remember to have read in some commentator about their times, this observation. Some say, there were two sorts of Jewish proselytes; but it is a mistake. There was but one. That is proof, that the notion of two sorts of proselytes was then embraced by some.

But though I cannot now say, where I met with that observation; I have by me divers extracts made from Alphonsus Tostatus, who [d] flourished in the fifteenth century, and died in the year 1454. From which extracts it appears, that himself acknowledged but one sort of Jewish proselytes, and that by "strangers within their gates, and sojourners," he understood men circumcised, who had embraced the Jewish religion.

Upon Exodus ch. xii. he says, 'A [e] native is he, who was born in the Hebrew religion, 'having a Hebrew father. A sojourner is one, who comes from Gentilism into the Jewish 'religion.'

Upon Exodus xx. explaining the fourth commandment, he says, 'That [f] by "strangers 'within thy gates" are meant converts from Gentilism to Judaism. They also must observe 'the sabbath. They dwell within thy gates, that is, within the gates of thy cities.'

Upon Matt. xxiii. 15. he says. 'Proselyte [g] denotes a man converted to Judaism. The 'Jewish people consisted of two parts. Some were Jews by ancient descent, and were called 'children of Israel: others were converted from among the nations to Judaism. And these 'were called by three names, sojourners, strangers, and proselytes. Those two divisions are 'very common in the books of Moses: "the children of Israel, and the strangers that sojourn 'among you:" particularly in the seventeenth chapter of Leviticus: that is, such as were Jews 'by birth, or such as were converted to Judaism. So also Ezek. xiv. 1. "Every one of the 'house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, 'and setteth up his idols in his heart." It is evident, that by the stranger is meant a proselyte, 'who had been converted to God. Otherwise he could not be separated from him.'

I have transcribed but a small part of his notes upon Matt. xxiii. 15. which are large, and well deserve to be read by such as have opportunity. So far as I am able to judge, he always

[a] Dr. Ward is not alone in this way of speaking. Dr. Hammond's paraphrase of Acts x. 2. in Le Clerc's Latin version is thus: Hic Cornelius erat Judaïcæ religionis proselytus —— licet circumcisus non esset. I do not see, how any men of judgment and candour can approve of this. For a paraphrast ought not to add to the original. See by all means Dr. Doddridge's note [b] upon that text.

[b] See Vol. III. ch. xviii.

[c] The same.

[d] See Du Pin, and Morery.

[e] Indigena dicitur, qui in Hebræorum ritu natus est, quia patrem Hebræum habebat. Colonus dicitur, qui ad colendum verum Deum transit, ad ritum Judaïcum veniens de Gentilitate. In Ex. cap. xii. Qu. lviii. T. II. p. 160. E. Colon. Agrip. 1613.

[f] 'Advena, qui est intra portas tuas.] Id est, etiam observabunt diem Sabbati advenæ de Gentilitate conversi ad Judaïsmum. Et isti sunt intra portas tuas, id est, intra portas civitatum tuarum. In Ex. xx. Qu. xiv.

[g] Dicendum est, quod proselytus denotat hominem conversum ad Judaïsmum. Judæi autem distinguebantur in duo, quia quidam ex origine primâ erant Judæi; et isti vocabantur filii Israël. Alii erant conversi de Gentibus ad Judaïsmum; et isti vocabantur tribus nominibus, sc. advenæ, peregrini, et proselyti. Et ista duo nomina sunt multum usitata in libris Moysis; sc. homo de filiis Israëlis et de advenis, qui peregrinantur inter vos. Lev. xvii. id est, sive sit de Judæis ex genere, sive de illis qui conversi fuerunt ad Judaïsmum. Ezech. xiv. Homo de domo Israël, et de proselytis, quicumque advena fuerit in Israël, si alienatus fuerit a me, et posuerit idola sua in corde suo. Ex quo apparet, quod erat jam conversus ad Deum, qui proselytus est, quia alias non potuit a Deo alienari, &c. In Matt. cap. xxiii. Qu. 87. p. 325.

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speaks agreeably to the true tenour of the Mosaic law, and is altogether unbiassed by modern Rabbinical interpretations.

I cannot say, whether Erasmus was acquainted with the notion of two sorts of proselytes, or not. He speaks very judiciously in his comment upon Matt. xxiii. 15. Where he says: 'Pro-'selyte [a] is a Greek word, equivalent to stranger. For so the Hebrews called those, whom they 'received from other nations into communion with them.'

Philip Melancthon also was a learned man. He was born in 1497, and died in 1560. I think, we may be positive, that he knew nothing of any proselytes, but such as were circumcised, and thereby obliged to observe all the ritual ordinances of the law of Moses. His comment upon Matt. xxiii. 15. is very observable. And I shall transcribe [b] it.

'Here you may learn, that God had a church at all times, even among the Gentiles. And 'in the times of the kingdom of Israel and Judah there were three states of men, who were 'members of the church.

'The first state were the seed of Abraham. Those were to be circumcised, and to keep the 'ceremonies according to the law of Moses.

'The second state was that of the proselytes, that is, strangers, who were not of the seed of 'Abraham, but yet were willing to be a part of that people, and were willing to be circumcised. 'These, because they were willing to be circumcised, were bound to observe all the other cere-'monies. Of this number was Urias.

'The third state are such as in the Acts are called religious men, that is, Heathens, as 'Naaman the Syrian, Nabuchodonosor, Cyrus, Cornelius, and many others, who learned the 'promises concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the doctrine concerning the true God, 'and concerning good works, agreeably to the decalogue. These were not circumcised, nor 'did they observe the Mosaic ceremonies.'

So writes Melancthon, and, as I think, according to the sense of all Christian writers of the first twelve centuries, and later.

I shall not proceed any lower in the inquiry, when that opinion, which now prevails so much, had its first rise among Christians.

But I shall proceed in my argument.

The word, proselyte, occurs four times in the books of the New Testament. [c] Matt. xxiii. 15. Acts ii. 10. ch. vi. 5. and ch. xiii. 43. I suppose it to be universally allowed by learned men, that in the first three texts by proselyte is intended a man circumcised after the manner of Moses. Nor do I know, that there is any doubt about the fourth and last text. And the place was so understood by [d] ancient Christian writers. And among the moderns Grotius is very clear, that [e] hereby are intended proselytes, or as he calls them, after the now prevailing custom, and to prevent mistake, proselytes of righteousness.

However, as this text is somewhat particular, I shall consider it distinctly. "Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes, followed Paul and Barnabas, who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. *των σεβομενων προσηλυτων.* I know, that by *σεβομενοι*, in this place, Dr. Ward did not understand a religious

[a] Proselytus Græca vox est, *προσηλυτος*, nobis 'advena.' Sic enim dicebatur Hebræis, quem ex alienâ natione in suæ legis consortium receperant. Erasm.

[b] Hic discatis, quod Deus omni tempore sibi colligit ecclesiam, etiam ex gentibus. Ac tempore regni Israël et Juda, erant tres status hominum, qui erant membra ecclesiæ.

Primus status erat semen Abrahæ. Hic oportuit circumcidi, et servare cæremonias juxta legem Mosis.

Secundus status erat proselytorum, id est, advenarum, qui non erant nati ex semine Abrahæ, sed tamen volebant esse pars hujus populi, et volebant circumcidi. Hi, quia volebant circumcidi, debebant etiam servare alias cæremonias, ut Urias.

Tertius status erat, qui in Actis vocantur viri religiosi, id est, Ethnici, ut Nahaman Syrus, Nabocodonosor, Cyrus, Cornelius, et alii multi. Qui discebant promissiones de venturo Messiâ, et doctrinam de vero Deo, et de bonis operibus, juxta Decalogum. Et tamen nec circumcisi erant, nec servabant cæremonias Mosaïcas. Melancthon. in Matt. T. III. p. 545. Witteb. 1563.

[c] The note of Lucas Brugensis upon Matt. xxiii. 15. is so neat, and pertinent, that I shall put it down here. 'Prose-'lytum.'] Græca vox est, Latine sonans 'advenam,' quem Hebræi efferunt Ger, quâ significant eum, quem ex alienâ natione in suæ legis consortium adduxerint: qui a Gentilitate ad Judaismum adductus est, non natione Judæus, sed adoptione factus, ac in Legis Mosaïcæ fœdera acceptus; quasi dicas adventitium ad religionem, quod opponitur Judæo nato. Luc. Brug.

[d] 'Secuti sunt multi Judæorum, et colentium advenarum.'] ——Significat eos, qui naturâ gentiles erant, sed religione Judæi, quos Græci proselytos vocant. Bed. in loc. Vid. et Œcum. in loc. p. 115, 116.

[e] 'Colentium advenarum.'] Non Græcorum, sed eorum, qui legi Mosis se subdiderant, advenæ justitiæ. Grot. in Act. xiii. 43.

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distinction or denomination, but a personal character. Œcumenius speaks to the like purpose. He says, 'These [a] persons were so called because they were sincere and fervent in their religion.' It is used in the same sense by Josephus, when he says, that [b] Alexandra, widow of Alexander Jannæus, was a religious woman, or religious toward God.

Afterwards Œcumenius seems to give another interpretation, saying; 'Or otherwise [c] he 'calls the proselytes worshippers properly. He addresseth himself to them before, saying, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God." [Comp. ver. 16. and 26.] 'calling the proselytes "men 'that feared God." Thus he gives to the former the honour of their birth, calling them "men 'of Israel." And though he could not say that of the other, he makes them equal for their 'religion.' The place is somewhat obscure. But I think, he intends to say, that St Luke, by calling those men worshippers, makes them equal to the Israelites, in point of religion, because the word worshipper does properly denote one who is proselyted to the Jewish religion: whereas fearing God might be ascribed to other men, who were not so united to the Jewish people.

There is one place in Josephus, where this word is used, which appears to be very remarkable. It is in his account of the plundering the temple at Jerusalem, by Crassus, in the year before Christ 54. 'Nor ought it to be thought strange, says [d] Josephus, that there should be such 'riches in our temple, when all the Jews and worshippers of God from every part of the world, 'from Europe and Asia, had been sending presents thither for several ages.'

By worshippers in this place, I think, must be meant proselytes. And worshippers here is a sort of technical word, like that of proselytes, denoting men that had joined themselves to the Jewish people, and were, by religion, though not by birth, Jews. I do not deny that some men who were not proselytes, but downright heathens and idolaters, did sometimes of their own accord, and freely, send presents to the Jewish temple. But here Josephus says, that all worshippers, as well as Jews, sent presents to the temple. We are thereby led to understand proselytes, who were as much obliged to pay respect to the temple as Jews by descent.

This word is found several times in the Acts, and, as seems to me, in its proper sense. I shall consider all those texts.

Acts xiii. 50. "But the [e] Jews stirred up the devout [rather the worshipping] and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution againt Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts."

These might be called, not improperly, proselytes: though never initiated by any particular rite. Later Jews may say, that [f] women were initiated by baptism. But there is no ground for it in the law of Moses. I think that women were first so honoured and distinguished under the gospel dispensation. Therefore St. Paul says, that "There is neither male nor female;——for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii. 28. And we are assured, that when the people of Samaria "believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women." Acts viii. 12. And Lydia and her household were baptized, Acts xvi. 15.

I pay no regard to what the later Jewish Rabbins say of the method of initiating proselytes, by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice: who have made void not only the moral, (with which our Lord often chargeth them, as Matt. xv. 1—9. Mark vii. 1—13. and other places,) but also the ritual part of the law of God. Indeed, they had corrupted the Mosaic ritual, by numberless additions, before the coming of our Saviour. As appears from the text of St. Mark just referred to. Nor have they ceased to do the like since.

I think, as before said, that women were first baptized under the evangelical dispensation. I am also of opinion, that our blessed Lord's forerunner first made use of baptism as an initiating

[a] Σεβομενης ενταυθα τε και προϊων τους περι το οικειον σεβας θερμως και διαπυρως και ζηλωτας των αλλων μαλλον καλει. Œcum. in Act Ap. p. 115.

[b] ——σεβομενη περι το θειον. De B. J. l. 1. v. 2. And see vol. I.

[c] —— η σεβομενους ιδιως προσηλυτους καλει. Και δημηγορων εμπροσθεν, και λεγων, Ανδρες Ισραηλιται, και οι εν υμιν φοβουμενοι τον Θεον, φοβουμενους τον Θεον τους προσελυτους καλει, τους μεν απο του γενους σεμνυνων, και Ισραηλιτας εξονομαζων, τους δε, ότι μη τουτο ειχεν ειπειν, απο θρησκειας ισαζων. Ib. p. 116.

[d] —— παντων των κατα την οικουμενην Ιουδαιων, και σεβομενων τον Θεον. Ant. l. 14. vii. 2.

[e] Οι δε Ιουδαιοι παρωτρυναν τας σεβομενας γυναικας, και τας ευσχημονας, και τους πρωτους της πολεως.

[f] The Rabbinical accounts of initiating proselytes may be seen in Reland. Antiq. Hebr. P. II. cap. 7. p. 246. and Moses Maimon. Tract. de Proselytis. cap. 1. p. 113, 114, ex. ed. H. Prid. Oxon. 1679.

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ordinance: and therefore he was called the Baptist. Ο Βαπτιςης Matt. iii. 1. and in many other places. Nor am I singular in this opinion.

Josephus, [a] who makes so long a story about circumcising Izates, does not say, that Helena, his mother, was initiated by an external rite: though she likewiee embraced the Jewish religion.

The worshipping women, above-mentioned, whom [b] Grotius calls proselytes, were unquestionably reckoned to be of the Jewish religion. Josephus, speaking of affairs in the year of Christ sixty-six, says, 'The [c] men of Damascus formed a design to make away with all the Jews of that 'place. But they concealed their design from their wives, who, excepting a few only, were all 'devoted to the Jewish religion.'

Acts xvi. 13, 14. At Philippi in Macedonia. "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made [or, where an oratory was appointed to be,] and we sat down, and spake unto the women, which resorted thither. And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us." σεβομενη τον Θεον.

Acts xvii. 1—4. "And they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them. And three sabbath days [successively] reasoned with them out of the scriptures. And some of them," that is, of the Jews, who were so by birth, or Israelites, "believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas: and of the devout [worshipping] Greeks, a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." των τε σεβομενων ελληνων πολυ πληθος.

These worshipping Greeks must have been proselytes: for they frequented the synagogue, and were admitted there without scruple. They were among the ordinary stated attendants on the worship there.

It is true, when at Antioch, in Pisidia, it is said, Acts xiii. 42, 44. "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought, that these words might be preached unto them the next sabbath.—— And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city to hear the word of God."

But this was an extraordinary case. And under "almost the whole city" must be comprehended many heathens and idolaters of the place. And from this very context it appears, that none besides Jews and proselytes frequented the synagogue. For it is here said, "When the Jews were gone out—— the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them." Therefore they were not present at St. Paul's first discourse. It was owing to some general rumour only, that their curiosity had been raised.

St. Luke, in the place just cited from Acts xvii. at the beginning, does not mention St. Paul's preaching at Thessalonica to any besides Jews and worshipping Greeks. Nevertheless the apostle, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, ch. i. 9. writes to them as "having turned to God from idols, to serve the living God." St. Paul therefore, whilst at Thessalonica, either between the sabbaths above-mentioned or afterwards, must have preached to and converted a considerable number of Gentiles. And there [d] seems good reason to think, that the apostle and his fellow-labourers stayed longer at Thessalonica than three weeks. For whilst he was there, the Philippians "sent once and again to his necessity," Philip. iv. 16. He also reminds the Thessalonians, that whilst he was with them, he and his companions "laboured night and day, that they might not be chargeable to any of them."

Acts xvii. 17. At Athens. "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met him." Διελεγετο μεν ουν εν τη συναγωγη τοις Ιουδαιοις, και τοις σεβομενοις. It should have been rendered, *with the Jews, and the worshippers*, agreeably to the [e] Latin Vulgate, here, and elsewhere, *et colentibus*, not *religiosis*, as in Beza.

These were proselytes: for they frequented the synagogue equally with the Jews: and Paul applied himself equally to them. This, as we learned from the passage of Josephus before quoted,

[a] Antiq. l. 20. cap. ii.

[b] Τας σεβομενας γυναικας, 'mulieres religiosas.'] Proselytas. Nam erant et proselyti in eâ urbe, ut audivimus supra, ver. 43. Grot. in loc.

[c] Απασας πλην ολιγων υπηγμενας τη Ιουδαϊκη θρησκεια. De B. J. l. 2. xx. 2. And see vol. I. p. 66.

[d] See Dr. Benson's History of the first planting the Christian Religion, B. 3. ch. v. sect. 5. p. 99.

[e] Disputabat igitur in synagogâ cum Judæis, et colentibus, et in foro, per omnes dies, ad eos qui aderant. Vers. Lat.

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was the proper distinction and denomination of those who by proselytism joined themselves to the people of Israel. They were not of the stock of Israel: but they worshipped with them, in synagogues and at the temple. They paid tribute to the temple, as other Jews did. They might offer sacrifices there, and they kept the passover. In other words, they were in full communion with the people of Israel in religious ordinances. They partook with them in all their religious privileges, and joined with them in all their solemnities. They were therefore very properly called worshippers.

Acts xviii. 1—7. "After these things Paul departed from Athens and came to Corinth.—— And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was the Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed; he shook his raiment, and said unto them: Your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean. Henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

"Who worshipped God," σεβομενε τον Θεον. Justus was a proselyte. He was one of those Greeks whom Paul persuaded, together with the Jews, in the synagogue. And Justus was convinced by what Paul said, and became a Christian. That Paul, whilst in the synagogue, preached to Jews only, that is to men circumcised, Jews by birth or by religion, is apparent from the history, ver. 4, 5. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit," and testified to the Jews "that Jesus was the Christ:" 'That is, upon the coming of 'those two his fellow-labourers, he was encouraged: and also animated with the greatest ardour: 'and once more, and finally, "testified to the Jews," that Jesus was the expected and promised 'Messiah.' "But when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed; he shook his raiment, and said unto them: Your blood be upon your own heads. I am clean. Henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."

Let this suffice for explaining the word σέβομενος, *worshipper*.

I now intend to take notice of some other Greek words, which in our translation are rendered *devout*.

Acts x. 1, 2. "There was a certain man in Cesarea, called Cornelius—— a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house." ευσεβης. It should be rendered *pious*.

Ver. 7. "And when the angel, which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier, of them that waited upon him continually." στρατιωτην ευσεβη.

Here again is the same Greek word, which should be translated *pious*. It denotes not any religious distinction or denomination: but is a personal character. Cornelius is never called a proselyte, nor σεβομενος, a worshipper. And that he and his family and all the company at his house, were Gentiles, and uncircumcised, is manifest, as from other places, so particularly from ch. xi. 1—9.

I shall observe likewise upon another Greek word rendered by us *devout*, in some places.

Luke ii. 25. "And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon. And the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel." Και ο ανθρωπος ουτος δικαιος, και ευλαβης. I should be disposed to render it thus: 'And he was a righteous and understanding man.' Simeon was righteous, or religious, and also knowing and discreet.

Acts ii. 5. "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." ανδρες ευλαβεις. The same word again, and to be understood in the like manner: denoting, that there were then at Jerusalem Jews from all parts, who were the most eminent men of the nation, and most distinguished for their zeal, their understanding, and their outward circumstances and condition.

Ch. viii. 2. "And devout men carried Stephen to his burial." Συνεκομισαν δε τον Στεφανον ανδρες ευλαβεις. I should like to translate the word in this place 'discreet.' "And discreet men carried forth Stephen, and made great lamentation for him." Such men were the best fitted for the kind office here spoken of. Wisdom, or discretion, and circumspection, appear to be included in the verb, as used in Acts xxiii. 10. and Heb. xi. 7. And observe likewise the noun substantive in Heb. v. 7.

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IV. THE OCCASION AND DESIGN OF THE DECREE. The other question concerning the apostolic decree, at the head of this Dissertation, is, whether it was perpetual.

I now therefore intend to consider the occasion of it, and then to explain it. Wherein will be contained a sufficient answer to the question proposed above.

I begin with laying down these several following propositions.

1. This epistle, or decree, was designed for the use and direction of all the Gentile converts to Christianity at that time. This was shown before; and needs no enlargement here.

2. The several regulations of the council at Jerusalem relate to things in their own nature indifferent.

1.) The point in controversy relates to things in their own nature indifferent. Therefore it is likely, that the determination of the question should be of the like kind. The rise of the controversy, and all the debates upon the occasion, lead us to think, that the regulations of the council should concern things indifferent, ritual, and ceremonial. There never was a question, whether believers from among the Gentiles should obey the moral precepts of righteousness and true holiness. But the dispute was, whether they should be circumcised, and observe the ritual ordinances of the law of Moses, as the Jews did.

They who have any doubt about this, should do well to attend to the history of this council, and particularly the occasion of it, at the beginning of the fifteenth chapter of the book of the Acts, and throughout. However, I shall transcribe below the sentiments of divers learned and judicious commentators, [a] who speak to the like purpose. To whom, possibly, some others may be added in the process of this argument.

2.) The apostles and elders call what they recommend in their epistle, a burden. Βαρος. Ver. 28. "It seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden, than these necessary things."

Which word may lead us to think, they intend not such things as are in themselves reasonable, and always obligatory.

'Burden,' say Beausobre and Lenfant, in their note upon this place, 'is the same with "yoke," 'mentioned ver. 10. These expressions show, that the discourse is about ceremonial observances, 'which are considered as a yoke and burden, in opposition to moral precepts, which ought not 'to be reckoned burdensome: since the reason and consciences of men teach them, that they are 'obligatory in themselves.'

Rev. ii. 24, 25.——"I will put upon you no other burden: Βαρος. "But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come." Where, I think, our exalted Lord refers to this decree of the apostles. And he graciously declares, that this burden should not always lie upon his people; but should be taken off from them, when his religion had made greater progress in the world.

Our Lord inviting men to receive his instructions, as the rule of life, in order to their obtaining everlasting salvation, says, Matt. xi. 30. "My yoke is easy, and my burden [το φορτιον μου] is light." But he therein intends to say, as I apprehend, that his requirements are not burdensome at all, and that observing them will afford great pleasure and delight.

So St. John says, 1 John v. 3. 'And his commandments are not grievous." They are not grievous, or burdensome, because they are in themselves reasonable, and approve themselves to the judgment and understanding of all men.

As the things recommended in this epistle, are so distinctly spoken of, as a burden; it is likely they were not then understood to be in themselves reasonable.

3.) Another character of these regulations of the Council is, that they are necessary things. By which I think ought to be understood such things [b] as are expedient.

Undoubtedly, moral virtues are of all things the most necessary, according to the general use of the word among us. Both reason and revelation assure us of their absolute necessity. To promote real holiness is the great design of all true religion. Nor is any institution so well

[a] Non censet, monendos pios ex Gentibus de iis, quæ satis didicerant: Deum colendum unum verum, non falsos; ei omnem exhibendam reverentiam; abstinendum a cædibus, a rapinis, injuriis, adulteriis, et incestis jure Gentium cognitis: jus cuique reddendum. Sed de iis monet, quæ disputationem recipere videbantur, et quæ Judæos poterant offendere, et impedire, quo minus pii ex Gentibus cum piis Hebræis in unam ecclesiam coalescerent. Grot. in Act. xv. 20. sub in.

Hæc ille [Tertullianus] a scopo aberrans, cum nulla hic sit nisi rerum suâpte naturâ mediarum mentio. Bez. annot. in Act. xv. 20.

[b] Necessaria autem hic intellige ad pacem Ecclesiæ, quæ tum erat, per tolerantiam infirmorum; non autem necessaria per se, et simpliciter, exceptâ scortatione. Piscator in Act. xv. 28.

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suited to make men truly and eminently virtuous and holy, as the Christian. Nevertheless in the language of the New Testament, moral virtues are not usually called necessary things, nor holiness, said to be of necessity. I am not aware of more than one text, in which any moral virtue is recommended under that character. It is Rom. xiii. 5. "Wherefore [a] ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake." In other places the meaning of the word is expedient, fit, proper, convenient, in certain seasons and circumstances. Says St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Therefore [b] I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go before unto you, to make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before," 2 Cor. ix. 8.

To the Philippians: "Yet [c] I supposed it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus, my brother," ch. ii. 25. And, "nevertheless to abide in the flesh [d] is more needful for you," ch. i. 24. In the epistle to the Hebrews: "It [e] was therefore necessary that the patterns of the things in the heavens should be purified with these," ch. ix. 23. St. Luke in the Acts: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It [f] was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you," Acts xiii. 46. In all which places, as seems to me, this expression denotes what is expedient, highly proper and convenient, considering the circumstances of things and persons. And so the phrase is understood here by some [g] very judicious commentators.

I would however observe, that the [h] original phrase in this place is somewhat particular. And, instead of these necessary things, some [i] rather understand such things as it was needful for the apostles to impose. But this, as I apprehend, makes little difference: whether these things were such as the circumstances of things obliged the Council to require, or the Gentile Christians to observe.

4.) None of the Christian converts needed to be informed, that they ought to keep themselves from the practice of such things as are immoral, and in their own nature evil, and unreasonable.

Take things sacrificed to idols for idolatry, blood for homicide, and fornication for uncleanness, or any sins contrary to moral purity: and there was not a Gentile convert to the Christian religion, whether converted by Paul, or Barnabas, or any other Jewish preacher of the Gospel, but knew his duty in all those respects. Men may need to be exhorted to the practice of what they know to be their duty, and to be dissuaded from things which they know to be evil. But men do not need to be informed of what they know already.

5.) If the apostles, and elders, and brethren, present in this council, had intended to forbid in their epistle things contrary to morality; they would have added divers other things, beside those here mentioned.

They would, in that case, expressly have forbidden lying, perjury, wrath, evil-speaking, theft, robbery, adultery, and all uncleanness. I might add, that if it had been the design of this assembly to remind the converts, to whom they write, of their duties and obligations as Christians; they would have exhorted them particularly to persevere in the faith of Christ, and would have recommended to them the duty of bearing the cross, or of patience and fortitude under afflictions and persecutions for his name's sake.

6.) All the several particulars of the decree must be understood to be of the like kind.

They ought to be all moral, or all indifferent. At least, it appears to me to have a good deal of probability, that the writers of the epistle would not put together things of a different nature, without denoting their difference, or making a distinction between them. That all these things are not moral, or reasonable in themselves, and in their own nature obligatory upon all men, in all times, is apparent. Therefore none are so.

[a] Διο αναγκη. κ. λ.

[b] Αναγκαιον ουν ηγησαμην.

[c] Αναγκαιον δε ηγησαμην ——

[d] —— αναγκαιοτερον δι υμας.

[e] Αναγκη ουν τα μεν υποδειγματα των εν τοις ουρανοις, τουτοις καθαριζεσθαι.

[f] Υμιν ην αναγκαιον πρωτον λαλη θηναι τον λογον του Θεου.

[g] 'Necessaires.'] Il s'agit ici d'une nécessité relative aux circonstances des temps, des personnes, et des lieux, pour dégager les gentils de toute participation à l'idolatrie, et pour marquer aux juifs autant d'égards qu'il se pouvoit, sans blesser la liberté Chrétienne. Lenf. et Beaus. sur Actes xv. 28.

[h] Πλην των επαναγκες τουτων.

[i] Non imponeremus hæc, nisi necesse esset ea imponere. Non dicunt: imponimus hæc necessaria, sed imponimus hæc, quæ necesse est, scilicet, imponere. Comment. Practicus. Caspar Streson. in Act. Ap. p. 568. Amst. 1658.

The Latin Vulgate is 'hæc necessaria.' Beza translates, 'præter necessaria ista.' But in his annotations says, Id est, ad quæ nos adigit præsens necessitas, nempe quod aliter non possint Judæi lucrifieri, non quod ista per se ad salutem requirerentur. Bez. in xv. 48.

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These several considerations, as seems to me, amount to a convincing and satisfactory proof, that nothing in this decree is of a moral nature.

V. THE DECREE EXPLAINED. Here some may say: How then do you understand them? To which I answer, That I am not obliged to explain any of them. Things necessary, or expedient, in some places, at certain seasons, and upon account of the circumstances of things and persons, need not to be understood by all in all times, or by those, who are under no obligation to observe them. It may be supposed, that they to whom the epistle was sent understood it. And it is unquestionable, that if any articles were obscure, or ambiguous, they who delivered the epistle were able to explain them. And so long as these regulations were necessary, or expedient, to be kept and observed, it is likely that the right sense and design of them were generally understood. But, as that expedient ceased, or abated, the exact meaning of these regulations might be gradually lost, or not distinctly retained by all.

However, I am not unwilling to show the probable meaning of these several articles, according to the best of my ability.

The whole decree consists of four articles. Which, as they are recited three times, are reckoned up in a different order, and in some small variety of expression.

Acts xv. 20. St. James proposeth them in the council after this manner: "That we write unto them, that they abstain from pollution of idols [a] and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." At ver. 29. in the epistle itself: "That [b] ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." Afterwards, St. James in his discourse with the apostle Paul at Jerusalem, ch. xxi. 25. "Save [c] only, that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication." Which is the same order with that in the epistle, and shall be followed by me.

1. Pollutions of idols, or things offered to idols.

The obvious sense of this regulation is, that Gentile Christians should abstain from eating meats, which had been offered to idols by heathen people: I mean, in some circumstances. Several things in St. Paul's epistles confirm this interpretation, and may enable us to discern the design of this prohibition. As 1 Cor. ch. viii. throughout, and x. 14—23.

But this regulation is now obsolete, there being no longer any heathen idols among us. All the idolatry of ancient heathenism, once so general, and so much delighted in by princes and people, is abolished in this part of the world. By the progress of the Gospel God hath wonderfully accomplished what he long before said he would perform. Zeph. ii. 11. "The Lord will be terrible unto them; for he will famish all the gods of the earth. And men shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen."

2. And from blood.

This I take to be a prohibition to drink or eat the blood of brute animals alone, or mixed with other things, raw, or dressed and prepared.

It may be of use to us to observe here some of those places in the Old Testament, where the eating of blood is prohibited.

Gen. ix. 3, 4. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you: even as the green herb have I have given you all things. But flesh, with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."

Lev. xvii. 10—14. "And whatsoever man there is of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will set my face against that man that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood. And I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls. For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, no soul of you shall eat blood; neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. And whatever man there is of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, who hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten: he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust: for it is the life of all flesh. The blood of it is for the life thereof. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, ye shall eat the blood of no

[a] Του απεχεσθαι απο των αλισγηματων των ειδωλων. ver. 20.
[b] Απεχεσθαι ειδωλοθυτων. ver. 29.
[c] —— ει μη φυλασσεσθαι αυτους του, τε ειδωλοθυτων.

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manner of flesh. For the life of all flesh is the blood thereof. Whosoever eateth it, shall be cut off."

That law in Leviticus, and the like elsewhere, are given to the house of Israel, and likewise to the strangers that joined themselves to them: for no others could offer sacrifices; nor could any others be cut off for transgressing these laws, but such as were of that people. The reason here assigned, that the blood was appointed to make atonement upon the altar, can affect none but Jews, and other men circumcised after the manner of Moses.

Eating blood cannot be reckoned an immorality. And, if it is not, this prohibition, in the decree, cannot be binding upon all men in all times; but only at some seasons, when the circumstances of things render the forbearing it expedient.

All wholesome food is lawful in itself, and under the gospel dispensation. As St. Paul says, Rom. xiv. 14, 15. "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." And ver. 19. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." See also what there follows, and 1 Cor. viii. 11—13.

However, I must add, that blood appears to me very unwholesome. Indeed I esteem it filthy, and highly disagreeable; so that I cannot bear the thought of eating it. If it ever comes to me in food, it is more than I know. And I suppose it is never brought, neither alone nor mixed with other things, to the tables of polite people.

There seem to me to be two reasons for this prohibition, even in the law of Moses. One reason is that above-mentioned, that it was to make atonement for them, that is, for offences against the law. The other reason is thus expressed: "It is the life of all flesh. The blood of it is for the life thereof." That is, it is the nourishment of the animal, and not fit for your nourishment. And because it was not fit for food, and was useless and offensive; therefore it was to be poured out upon the earth, or covered with dust, that is, buried in the earth: which order is frequently repeated. So in ver. 13, of the forecited seventeenth chapter of Leviticus, and Deut. xii. 16. "Only ye shall not eat the blood. Ye shall pour it upon the earth as water." And again ver. 24, and ch. xv. 23.

The prohibition of blood was like the prohibition of fat. Lev. iii. 15—17. "And the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them—— it shall be taken away. And the priest shall burn them upon the altar. It is the food of the offering made by fire, for a sweet savour. All the fat is the Lord's. It shall be a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood." And ch. vii. 25. "For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, shall be cut off from his people." That is the reason which is expressed, and for which the penalty is so great. But another reason may be implied, which is, that the fat cleaving to the kidneys of animals is not* wholesome.

Those ordinances answered two ends and purposes. They kept the Jewish people separate from other nations, and also promoted their bodily health and vigour. And for all their labour and self-denial, they had a present reward.

In the frequent washings and purifications appointed the Jewish people, I suppose their health was consulted: as it was likewise in the directions concerning creatures clean and unclean.

Lev. xi. 3. "Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat." See also Deut. xiv. 4—8. And it must be allowed, that such beasts as have both those properties, are preferable for food to others: as the ox, the sheep, the goat, and the deer of every kind. And though we do eat some animals which have but one of those properties, as the coney, the hare, the swine; we never eat those which have neither of those properties; that is, which neither chew the cud, nor divide the hoof. Nor do we use for food any of the birds, or fowls, forbidden in that long list, Lev. xi. 13—20. and Deut. xiv. 12—20.

In ancient times there were among all people two sorts of creatures, clean and unclean. This

* And when they killed any of these, or other clean creatures for their food at home, still they were to forbear to eat the suet; partly out of reverence to God, whose portion it was at the altar; and partly, because it was heavy, and too strong a food, as Maimonides takes it. Patrick upon Levit. iii. 16.

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distinction obtained and was general before the flood. Noah, therefore, "was commanded to take with him into the ark of every clean beast by sevens, the male and the female: and of the beasts that are not clean, by two, the male and the female," Gen. vii. 1—3.

This distinction related as much to food as to sacrifice. For the worshipper, as well as the priest, partook of the altar, excepting in the case of whole burnt-offerings. Every living creature therefore, which was clean for sacrifice, was also clean for food.

This article was inserted in the epistle, out of regard to the Jewish believers; that the Gentile converts might not give them offence. As there are now no Jewish believers, to take offence at our eating of blood, we may do as we see good. We may avoid it, if we please, for the sake of health; but are not obliged to forbear it upon a religious account, which would be no better than superstition.

3. And from things strangled, that is, from the flesh of animals, that have not been fairly killed, so as that the blood might be all drained out of them whilst warm.

Upon this our learned author says, p. 175. 'This is omitted by many of the ancient fathers, 'and therefore by some esteemed a gloss.' But that is said rather too hastily, and without good ground; as may appear by what was said[a] formerly. This article is as genuine and authentic as the rest. It is in all Greek manuscripts in general, and is quoted by the most ancient writers of the church. But near the end of the fourth century, and afterwards the Latin Christians paid little regard to those regulations. And for that reason the apostolic decree is not always quoted exactly by writers in that language.

This regulation, like the preceding, must be understood to have been inserted, that the Gentile converts might not offend the Jewish believers. We, now, are at liberty to act as we see fit. We are under no obligation to forbear things strangled upon a religious account.

4. And from fornication.

I suppose it to have been already shown by general, but unanswerable reasons, that this epistle is not concerned about things of a moral nature: consequently, what we now generally mean by this word is not here intended: that being an immorality, and in itself unreasonable. But the true meaning is not certain: nor ought it to be thought strange, that it is not.

Beza's interpretation may be seen in his Annotations upon Acts xv. 20. He is clear, that things of a moral nature have no part in these regulations, but only such things as are in themselves indifferent, recommended for peace-sake, and out of regard to weak brethren. Therefore this word is not here to be understood in its common acceptation. He applies it to some things mentioned by St. Paul in the eighth and tenth chapters of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, particularly, "sitting at meat in an idol's temple," 1 Cor. viii. 9.

But I apprehend, that what St. Paul there speaks of must rather relate to the first prohibition in this Epistle, "The pollution of idols, or things offered to idols."

To me it appears probable, that hereby are forbidden some alliances with heathens: which, though not absolutely unlawful, had better be avoided by Christians, lest they should prove dangerous temptations to apostasy. So the Apostle writes, Heb. xii. 16. "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." I suppose, that both these characters are given of Esau. He was not a lewd profligate or fornicator, in our sense of the word; but he married Canaanitish women, "which were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah," Gen. xxvi. 34, 35. Which Jacob carefully avoided, ch. xxviii. 6—9. [b] Theodoret mentions the interpretation which I have given of that text. I am indebted to Beausobre[c] for the reference.

I am confirmed in this interpretation by observing the earnestness, with which St. Paul dissuades Christians from marrying with heathens, though such marriages were not unlawful. 1 Cor. vii. 39. "The wife is bound by the law, as long as her husband liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord." 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

[a] See vol. II. p. 14—18.

[b] Μη τις πορνος, η βεβηλος, ὡς Ησαυ.] Πορνειαν τω Ησαυ την γαστριμαργιαν εκαλεσε—— Ουκ αν δε τις ἁμαρτοι, πορνειαν αυτο καλεσας και τον παρανομον γαμον· αλλοφυλες γαρ γυναικας ηγαγετο. Theod. in Heb. xii. 16. T. III. p. 456.

[c] See him on Heb. xii. 16.

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The Jews were forbidden by the law of Moses to marry with idolaters. Deut. vii. 3, 4. And see Malachi ii. 11. Ezra obliged many, who had married such women, to put them away, though they had children by them, ch. ix. and x. Nehemiah severely reproves such persons, and gives a reason against such marriages, which would be of some weight in the early times of the gospel, ch. xiii. 23—27. Remarkable are the words of Ex. xxxiv. 15, 16. "Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods: and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice: and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and they make thy sons go a whoring after their gods."

St. Paul has wisely determined the point: that Christians should not marry with idolaters, as before seen. Nor should a person converted to Christianity dissolve by separation a marriage, contracted whilst he was an idolater, and before his conversion to Christianity. But, if the unbelieving relative went off, then the Christian would be at liberty. So I understand what he says, 1 Cor. vii. 12—16. "If any brother has a wife, that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which has an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him—— But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother, or a sister, is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace." That is, if the unbelieving relative depart, the marriage must be dissolved. But the believing relative is not to be the first mover in dissolving the contract of marriage. Such things were done under the law. But a more friendly and peaceable behaviour is required of us. For, as he goes on, "What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or, how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" that is by bringing off in time such relatives, respectively, from idolatry to Christianity.

The danger of idolatry might still be great: but not so great under the gospel, as under the law. And the gospel of Christ was less burdensome, and more reasonable and inviting, than the law of Moses.

Marriages with idolaters were not to be dissolved: but yet should not be contracted. Though such a marriage would not be unlawful, yet it was a point of prudence, and a matter of expedience, to avoid it. This is what I understand by fornication in this Epistle. And as there are not now, and have not been for a good while in this part of the world, any heathen idolaters: this article, like the rest, is become obsolete. And as all the directions here given, relate to things expedient in the circumstances of those times; it is not to be at all wondered at, that the meaning of several of them is now obscure and doubtful.

VI. Observations, in the manner of corollary. I have now shown, that this Epistle was designed for the use of all believers from among the Gentiles; that the regulations, contained in it, are not of a moral nature, but relate to such things as are in their own nature indifferent. I have also endeavoured to show the meaning of each particular.

I am in great danger of being esteemed prolix. Nevertheless, as the subject is before me, I shall go on to put down some other observations, chiefly in the way of corollaries.

1. This decree is not to be understood as a precept, or commandment, but as delivering advice and counsel concerning some matters of prudence and expedience, considering the circumstances of things and persons at that time.

When Paul and Barnabas had returned to Antioch from a peregrination in several cities and countries, where they had preached the gospel, "They gathered the church together, and rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples," Acts xiv. 27, 28.

Whilst they were there, "certain men, which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, and said: Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined, that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. When they were come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church, and by the apostles and elders: and they declared all that God had done with them: but there had risen up certain of the sect of the pharisees which believed, who said, that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. And the apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and spoke"—— After that Barnabas and Paul were heard, "who declared what

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miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them." After which James riseth up, and reasons upon the point. And then concludes: "Wherefore my sentence is," Διο εγω κρινω, I judge, I determine, "that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: but that we write to them," επιστειλαι αυτοις, that they "abstain from pollutions of idols—— Then[a] pleased it the apostles," or it seemed good "to the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch—— And they wrote letters by them after this manner—— It[b] has seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden, than these necessary things—— From which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well:" 'You will do what is acceptable, and agreeable, and will be well taken 'by us, and by all the brethren of the circumcision.' So Cornelius says to St. Peter, ch. x. 33. "Immediately therefore I sent to thee. And thou hast well done, that thou art come." Philip. iv. 14. "You have well done, that you have communicated with me in my affliction." 3 John, ver. 6. "Whom, if thou bring forward in their journey, after a godly sort, thou wilt do[c] well.

Afterwards ch. xvi. 4. It is said of Paul and Barnabas, "that as they went through the cities[d] they delivered them the decrees to keep, that were ordained," determined, "by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem." The meaning of the Greek word here rendered decrees is equivalent to *placita*, resolutions, decisions, upon a question, and particularly, upon that question, which had been brought from Antioch to the apostles at Jerusalem.

For certain, if we have given a right interpretation of the words, these regulations are not a part of the gospel of Christ, which is everlasting; but wise decisions and determinations, suited to the circumstances of things, in the Christian church at that time.

2. These regulations are the result of that wisdom, with which the apostles of Christ were inspired, for deciding the question, whether Gentile converts should keep the law; and for directing their conduct, in the use of that liberty, which they had a right to, and was now secured to them.

"It has seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to us," that is, it has seemed good unto us,[e] under the divine influence and direction, "to lay upon you no other burden, than these necessary things:" which we have judged expedient to be observed by you in the present circumstances.

I say these regulations are the result of that wisdom, with which the apostles were inspired upon this occasion. For it does not appear, that any such regulations had obtained before. If they had, some notice would have been taken of it. And the reminding men of it would have tended to reconcile those, to whom these directions were sent to comply with them, and pay a regard to them. Nor can I discern either in Josephus, or in the books of the Old, or the New Testament, any hints or traces of them, before this council at Jerusalem.

I may hereafter enlarge farther upon the wisdom bestowed upon the apostles for conducting the affairs of the Christian church. All that I intended to say here, is no more than this: that the four articles in this decree are not taken from any Noachic precepts, nor from any other Jewish traditions: but were now first thought of, and first proposed and recommended by the apostles, upon occasion of the present emergency.

3. The several regulations of this decree were expedient and useful (as has been already hinted[f] several times) on one or both these accounts. 1. To prevent offence in the believing Jews, and facilitate civil converse, and religious communion between believing Jews and Gentiles. And 2. To secure the Gentile converts themselves, the more effectually from apostasy, or a return to idolatry, by keeping them out of the way of some dangerous snares and temptations.

That the former was one ground and reason of these regulations, may be reckoned evident from the history in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, and from many things in St. Paul's epistles: where he shows the expediency of forbearing some meats, when there was any hazard of offending a Christian brother. As Rom. xiv. and xv. at the beginning, and 1 Cor. chap. viii. and x. 25—33. That the latter was another ground and reason of the counsels here given, may be also argued to be very probable from St. Paul's exhortations to avoid dangerous temp-

[a] Τοτε εδοξε τοις αποστολοις.
[b] Εδοξε γαρ τω αγιω πνευματι, και ημιν.
[c] Vid. Grot. in Act. x. 33. et xv. 29.
[d] Παρεδιδουν αυτοις φυλασσειν τα δογματα τα κεκριμενα υπο των αποστολων. κ. λ.
[e] "Visum est Spiritui Sancto, et nobis.] Id est, visum est nobis ex extinctu, sive suggestione Spiritûs Sancti. ἐν δια δυω. Piscator in Act. xv. 28.
[f] See particularly, p. 505, note ε.

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tations to idolatry, which are likewise in the same context. See particularly, 1 Cor. x. 1—22, and 2 Cor. vi. 13—18.

4. There was a happy agreement in the council, and the regulations, now determined, were carried with great unanimity; as appears from the history in the fifteenth chapter of the book of the Acts.

St. Luke intimates, that for a while there was much disputing. It is very likely, that they who were for imposing the law upon the Gentiles, and now appeared before the council laboured to maintain their cause, and carry their point. And, possibly, their arguments at first appeared specious and plausible to some others, who were not engaged with them. But, that the resolutions, finally determined, were carried with a general consent, is manifest. We have the speech of the apostle Peter, who openly declares against imposing a law upon the Gentiles, as necessary to salvation. James afterwards speaks to the like purpose, sums up the arguments that had been alleged, and concludes the debates. The Epistle itself is written in clear and strong terms. And the judgment upon the point is delivered with the joint authority of all the members of the council. "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: namely, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren. And wrote letters by them after this manner. The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren, which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia." Then they pass a censure upon those, who had occasioned the disturbance at Antioch, and say: "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain, which went out from among us, have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment." They proceed. "It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore unto you Judas and Silas, who shall tell you the same things by mouth." How affectionate and respectful is all this! "For it has seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to us," that is, to us, under divine influence and direction, "to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things—— So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch. And when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren, and confirmed them."

Every part of this whole affair shows great unanimity, good temper, and admirable candour and discretion. When the messengers from the church at Antioch came to Jerusalem, and proposed the question; "The apostles and elders came together to consider of the matter." Having carefully weighed it, they all agree in one judgment. And when they send the decree away, they make the most honourable mention of Barnabas and Paul, who had preached the gospel in Syria, and other parts. With them they send Judas and Silas, who were some of the most eminent men of the church of Jerusalem, and also prophets themselves: next in knowledge and understanding, and in spiritual gifts, to apostles. Who, when they came to Antioch, "gathered together the multitude," or the whole church, and delivered to them the epistle: adding also observations of their own, tending to reconcile them to the regulations contained in it. And the Christians at Antioch were well satisfied, and rejoiced for the consolation afforded them, and for the regard that had been shown to them, in asserting and securing their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial appointments of the law of Moses.

This harmony continued: as appears from the discourses of James and the elders at Jerusalem, when Paul came thither again several years afterwards. "As touching the Gentiles which believe," say they, "we have written, and concluded, that they observe no such thing:" which shows, that this was still the judgment of James himself, and of the elders, and of the church at Jerusalem. Some exceptions there might be: but the determinations of the council were what the church at Jerusalem generally agreed to, and heartily approved of. They did not exact of the Gentile believers an entire conformity to the law of Moses, as necessary to salvation.

Paul readily received these regulations, as prudent counsels, or matters of expedience at that time. And the other apostles intended no more by them.

Paul and Barnabas, Judas and Silas, are the persons, who by name are charged with the epistle by the council. They carry it to Antioch, and deliver it to the church there. And Judas and Silas, moreover, recommend the observation of the things therein ordained: and

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doubtless with the approbation of Paul, who was then at Antioch, and continued there some time. When he left Antioch, he chose Silas to accompany him. And St. Luke has assured us, that "as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily," ch. xvi. 4, 5. And, several years after this, as before observed, when Paul came again to Jerusalem, and the elders there, with James, remind him of the several articles of the epistle, they mention them as things with which Paul was well satisfied. Nor does he show any dislike. His accepting of these decisions is also manifest from his epistles above quoted.

Once more, for showing the general consent with which these determinations were made, it ought to be observed, that all the apostles of Christ, or most of them, were present in the council of Jerusalem. For, as formerly shown[a] at large, there is good reason to think, that none of the twelve apostles left Judea to go and teach either Jews or Gentiles in other countries, until after the council. It is likely therefore, that they were all at the council where the controversy was fully determined; which was a great advantage. By that means the manner of receiving Gentiles into the church of God was fixed and settled beyond dispute, and beyond opposition. Or, if any opposition should be made afterwards, it could not be successful, nor very troublesome. And we may be assured, that all the apostles, and their disciples, would be harmonious, and preach the same doctrine to Jews and Gentiles wheresoever they went.

5. We may hence perceive the wisdom with which the apostles of Christ were furnished, for behaving in cases of difficulty that came before them; so as might be for the peace of the church, the edification of believers of every rank and capacity, and the preservation of the purity of the Christian doctrine.

I think the regulations of the council at Jerusalem, as just represented and explained, are a proof of this. The first and principal thing to be regarded by the apostles of Christ was the preservation of the purity of the doctrine which they had received from him. The Gentiles were by no means to be brought into subjection to the law of Moses, as necessary to salvation. It behoved the apostles of Christ to assert their freedom from an obligation to observe the peculiarities of the Mosaic dispensation. This is strongly done by Peter, and the others, in the debates at the council. And the rights of the Gentiles are well secured in the epistle written by them.

Nevertheless some regard was due to the Jewish believers——And the Gentiles were to be directed to avoid such such things as might be offensive to their brethren of the circumcision: and likewise to decline such things as might prove dangerous temptations to themselves, and be a means of ensnaring them, and leading them into apostasy.

In a word, one exercise of wise and good men in this world arises from different sentiments, especially in things of religion. We can evidently discern, that there were some differences of opinion, and some controversies among the followers of Jesus Christ, even in the apostolic age. Some thought, that the observation of the law of Moses was necessary for men's salvation, and were for imposing it, as such, upon the believing Gentiles.

Others of the Jewish believers, thought, that the law was obligatory upon themselves and their posterity, as a distinct nation and people, to whom that law had been delivered: whilst they hoped to be justified in the sight of God, and to be eternally saved, by faith in Jesus Christ, and sincere obedience to his precepts. These did not expect the Gentiles should come under the law of Moses, as necessary to salvation. Nevertheless they still had scruples about meats and drinks, and about conversing with them, who observed no such distinctions. Others there were, as it seems, among the Jews, who thought that the obligation of the law of Moses, as to its peculiarities, had ceased. And they judged no wholesome meat to be unclean; which was the opinion of the Gentile believers in general.

Hence there arose an obligation to a different conduct. And these last mentioned, whom we reckon the more knowing, and strong, were to practise prudence, condescension, forbearance, compliance. They were to do what lay in their power, as they had opportunity to enlarge the minds of men. In the mean time they were "to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves," Rom. xv. 1.

[a] See vol. III. ch. vi.

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But others, who were rigid, and would impose indifferent things, as necessary to salvation, were to be blamed, and reproved, as they are by this council. And every one knows, how they were withstood by the apostle Paul. And all who are attentive in reading the New Testament, may perceive, that the epistle of the council at Jerusalem exactly corresponds with the doctrine of Paul in his epistles, and that the temper of both is one and the same.

Some regard was due to the Jewish nation in general, even to the unbelievers among them, whilst they behaved with decency and civility. For a long time they had been favoured with many religious privileges above other men. As is acknowledged in Rom. ix. 4, 5. And it is the apostle's direction, 1 Cor. x. 32. "Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:" by the two former plainly meaning such as were unbelievers. And it is said, Acts xvi. 2, 3. that when Paul determined to have Timothy with him, who was "the son of a woman that was a Jewess, and believed; he took him, and circumcised him, because of the Jews who were in those quarters; for they all knew, that his father was a Greek." I think, those Jews were unbelievers. Paul would not offend them; and he might hope to gain some of them. See 1 Cor. ix. 19, 20.

But they were not the men, who occasioned the council of Jerusalem, or the decisions of it. The men, who came to Antioch, and taught the brethren there, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved," were pharisees who believed, Acts xv. 1. They were men, who went out from the church at Jerusalem, ver. 24. These are now reproved. But whilst the freedom of the Gentiles is asserted from a subjection to the law of Moses, and its appointments, some things are recommended to them as expedient for the time. Which might facilitate converse and communion with all the Jewish believers, who were tractable, and would be also useful for preserving themselves from some temptations to apostasy in those times.

6. We may hence perceive the reason, why those of the Jewish believers, who were for imposing the law upon the Gentiles, are so severely reproved, and condemned by St. Paul.

They were for imposing the law, and its observances, upon the Gentiles, as necessary to salvation. Which should be always attended by us, when we read St. Paul's epistles, and observe the tartness of his expressions. So says St. Luke very clearly. Ch. xv. 1. "Certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren: Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." See also ver. 5. And are not these men tartly reproved by the apostles and elders in their epistle, ver. 24? "Forasmuch as we have heard," say they, "that certain, which went out from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law."

And justly does St. Paul say of Peter, and the rest, who separated themselves from the Gentile Christians at Antioch, that "they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel," Gal. ii. 14. And as justly does he exhort, and argue, Gal. v. 1—4. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty, wherewith Christ has made us free. And be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised," esteeming it necessary to salvation, "he is a debtor to the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law. Ye are fallen from grace." Which now must be all clear. It can need no farther explication.

7. We may now discern, wherein lay the fault of the apostle Peter, and others, who complied too far with the rigid part of the Jewish believers.

The only place of scripture, where this is mentioned, is Gal. ii. 11—16. "But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles. But when they were come, he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews likewise dissembled with him: insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw, that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all: If thou being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews; why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ,

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that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law. For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

The fault of Peter lay in this, that his conduct implied the necessity of the Gentiles being circumcised, and keeping the ordinances of the Mosaic law, in order to their being saved. "Why[a] compellest thou the Gentiles to judaize!" that is, to[b] become Jews, and live according to the law of Moses, and that, in order to salvation. This was the meaning of his behaviour. The Gentiles at Antioch had believed in Jesus Christ, and heartily embraced his doctrine. Nevertheless Peter now behaved toward them, as if they were unworthy of converse, or communion with himself, or other Jewish believers. They were not yet of the church and people of God: but must, if they would be saved, be circumcised, and obey the law of Moses, as the Jewish people did.

This is what Paul blames Peter for. It is apparent from St. Paul's whole argument in this place. It follows next after the words just cited: "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing, that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law." Which plainly shows, that St. Paul is speaking of imposing the law, as necessary to acceptance with God: or, in other words, that he is speaking of justification, and salvation. And St. Peter says the same thing at the council, in almost the same words. Acts xv. 10, 11. "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we, were able to bear? For we believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they."

We see therefore, that Peter was now guilty of dissimulation. He acted contrary to his own judgment. And did what implied the necessity of the Gentiles receiving the law of Moses, in order to salvation. Thus he acted, "fearing them of the circumcision." I transcribe Augustin below,[c] who speaks exactly to the same purpose.

Some have been unwilling to think, that the apostle Peter should have exposed himself to this censure after the council of Jerusalem: though the order of St. Paul's narration, in the chapter just cited, implies as much. But the difference is not great. Peter's guilt may be aggravated thereby. But whether before, or after that council, he was now guilty of dissimulation. For he did eat, and converse for a while with the Gentiles at Antioch: and afterwards separated himself from them, "fearing them of the circumcision." And a part of Paul's argument is to this purpose: "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles," that is, sometimes, as he had lately done, and probably at some other times likewise, "and not as do the Jews; why compellest thou the Gentiles to judaize?" Or, as Mr. Locke: 'If thou, being a Jew, takest the liberty sometimes to live after the manner of the Gentiles, not keeping to those rules, which the Jews observe; why doest thou constrain the Gentiles to conform themselves to the rites, and manner of living of the Jews?'

Moreover, we know, that long before the council of Jerusalem, Peter had been at the house of Cornelius at Cesarea, and received him, and his company, though Gentiles, into the church by baptism. And, when he returned to Jerusalem, and there were some, "who contended with him, because he had gone to men uncircumcised, and did eat with them:" he having rehearsed the whole matter to them, they were satisfied, "and glorified God, saying: Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," Acts x. and xi. 1—8. Of which St. Peter takes particular notice in his speech at the council, Acts xv. 7—9.

This action of Peter therefore was hypocrisy, or dissimulation, as St. Paul justly calls it, a mean compliance, contrary to judgment, through fear of the displeasure of unreasonable men. And this was the fault of all the rest who joined him in that behaviour. "And the other Jews," says St. Paul, "dissembled with him: insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation."

[a] Τι τα εθνη αναγκαζεις ιουδαϊζειν;

[b] The word is explained at large in vol. III. ch. xii.

[c] Quapropter non ideo Petrum emendavit, quod paternas traditiones observaret; quod si facere vellet, nec mendaciter nec incongrue faceret. Quamvis enim jam superflua, tamen solita non nocerent. Sed quoniam Gentes cogebat judaïzare; quod nullo modo posset, nisi ea sic ageret, tamquam adhuc etiam post Domini adventum necessaria saluti forent; quod vehementer per apostolatum Pauli veritas dissuasit. Nec apostolus Petrus hoc ignorabat. Sed id faciebat; timens eos qui ex circumcisione erant. Itaque et ipse vere correctus est, et Paulus vera narravit. Augustin. ad Hieron. ap. Hieron. Ep. 67, T. IV. P. II. p. 605.

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The apostle Peter, as is manifest, submitted, and acquiesced. And we may reasonably believe, that he never after showed the like unsteadiness, but was firm against the like temptation. The same may be well supposed of Barnabas, and most of the other Jews, who were now faithfully and openly reproved by St. Paul.

8. We may now be able to vindicate the conduct of the apostle Paul in complying, as he did at Jerusalem, with the advice of James, and the elders there. As related Acts xxi. 17—30.

I do not know, that we are bound to justify the conduct of any man, not even of an apostle, in all things. Nay, we cannot but acknowledge, that some of the most eminent of that order failed in some instances. We have just now been observing upon a faulty conduct of Peter. And it is likely, that in the contention between Paul and Barnabas, there was on each side a sharpness not to be justified. Acts xv. 36—41. Paul might be too much offended with Mark, "who departed from them from Pamphylia." And he might be too much exasperated at Barnabas, who had dissembled with Peter, when he separated himself from those, with whom he had before lived familiarly. But Paul was reconciled to both afterwards, and makes honourable mention of them in his epistles. Paul likewise seems to have been too much moved by the indignity offered him by the high-priest, Ananias, Acts xxiii. 1—5.

But we cannot willingly allow of many instances of misconduct in apostles. And we may be disposed to vindicate any men, so far as we reasonably can, especially men of eminence and extensive usefulness, whose usual conduct entitles them to esteem and reverence.

And, excepting the instances just mentioned, St. Paul's conduct, so far as we know, was free from censure. Indeed, I think, that his doctrine and his conduct, as a Christian and an Apostle, were always uniform, and harmonious; and that he never practised any compliances, but such as were agreeable to his avowed principles.

However, it is fit, that we should particularly consider what we find related in Acts xxi. 17—30.

This relation, as seems to me, is brought in to inform us, how, and in what manner, Paul was apprehended: that we might know the occasion of that imprisonment of the apostle, which was of so long continuance, and was attended with many incidents of importance. And as the apostle's imprisonment was a necessary part of his history, the occasion of it could not be omitted by a faithful and judicious historian, as St. Luke certainly is.

And there appear so many tokens of candour and good temper, wisdom and discretion in James and the elders of the church at Jerusalem, that, as one would think, men of ingenuity should be little disposed to surmise, that any thing was now proposed to Paul, or complied with by him, which was at all dishonourable to him, or derogatory to the true principles of religion, or to the interests, either of believing Jews or Gentiles.

But it is not to be expected, that all should be contented with such general observations. We will therefore observe every paragraph of this narration.

Ver. 17. "And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren," meaning the church in general, "received us gladly." The presence of Paul was acceptable to them, and in a friendly and affectionate manner they congratulated him upon his safe arrival among them.

Ver. 18, 19. "And the day following Paul went in with us unto James: and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly, what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry."

The original phrase, *κατ' εν εκαστον*, imports the exactness, and particularity of the accounts which Paul gave of his successes in the several cities and countries in which he had been, since he was last at Jerusalem. And here we cannot forbear to observe the frankness and openness, and also the humility of the apostle, in giving so full an account of himself: where he had been, and what he had done, and what tokens of divine approbation had been afforded to him, and to his endeavours. This resembles the account which Paul and Barnabas gave to the church of Antioch, upon their return thither, after they had fulfilled the work to which they had been appointed in an especial manner, Acts xiv. 26, 27. and compare ch. xiii. 1—4. The main difference is, that there "they gathered the church together, and rehearsed all that God had done with them." Here Paul speaks to James and the elders only of the church at Jerusalem.

Ver. 20. "And when they heard it they glorified the Lord." A proof of the truly Christian and charitable disposition of the chief men at Jerusalem. They rejoiced and were thankful to God for the progress of the gospel among the Gentile people, as preached to them by Paul.

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"And said unto him: Thou seest, brother, how many thousand Jews there are, which believe. And they are all zealous of the law:" thinking it still obligatory upon themselves, and their posterity, who are of the Jewish nation. However, they afterwards add, at ver. 25, agreeably to the determination of the council: "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written, and concluded, that they observe no such thing:" that is, that they need not, are under no obligation to observe the law, or its customs: but may be justified without observing them. Consequently, neither did the believing Jews expect to be justified by the law. And their zeal for it consisted only in a desire to keep it, as obligatory upon themselves, to whom it was delivered as a nation and people. They must generally (for we need not be unwilling to allow of exceptions for some individuals) have assented to what Peter says in the council, chap. xv. 11. "We believe, that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we [Jews] shall be saved, even as they," the Gentiles. Which is also agreeable to what St. Paul says to St. Peter himself, and as a thing well known, and allowed by such as believed in Christ, Galatians ii. 15, 16. "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing, that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law."

"They are all zealous of the law," in the sense just mentioned. But, possibly, even that was more than was approved of by James, and the elders, or the most knowing and understanding men in the church at Jerusalem.

Ver. 21. "And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake the law, saying That they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs."

"That they ought not," that is, that it was unlawful for them so to do. Which was a calumny upon the apostle. He never said so. He may have said, that they needed not to practice circumcision: or that they were at liberty to quit the observances of the law. As he is understood by some to say, Rom. vii. 1—6. But, he never said that it was unlawful, or sinful for the Jews to circumcise their children, and keep the law. And though this had been reported among the Jews at Jerusalem, it is evident that James, and the elders did not give credit to it. By their manner of speaking they show, that they were persuaded, and knew it to be a falsehood.

Ver. 22, 23, 24. "What is it therefore? The multitude must needs come together. For they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this, that we say unto thee. We have four men, which have a vow on them. Them take, and purify thyself with them, that they may shave their heads, and all may know that these things, whereof they are informed concerning thee, are nothing: but that thou thyself walkest orderly, [or regularly,] and keepest the law."

They recommend something to be done by Paul, as likely to be more satisfying, and convincing, than any verbal declaration could be. And he complies. Which showed, that he did not think it unlawful for a Jew to observe their customs. And that is all.

However, this compliance of the apostle must have been very agreeable to them, by whom the proposal was made. And though by the violence of the people of the city, and of others assembled there upon occasion of the feast, he was prevented from "accomplishing the days of the purification," and performing all the prescribed rites; there can be no question made, but that his design was well taken by the whole church at Jerusalem. He may have received many civilities from them, whilst he was kept in custody in Judea. And he was better qualified to write to them, at the end of his imprisonment, that excellent epistle, called to the Hebrews: and they, and other Jewish believers elsewhere, may have been better disposed to receive from him that word of exhortation, which was so well suited to their circumstances.

Though I have now gone over that history, perhaps it will not be disagreeable to some, if I add a word or two more by way of remarks upon it.

1.) St. Paul's complying with the proposal made to him by James, and the elders, did not at all weaken the freedom of the Gentiles from the law of Moses. Nor could it be understood by any so to do. This is manifest from the clear and open declaration here made by them, that "as touching the Gentiles, which believe, it had been concluded, that they observe no such thing."

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2.) What St. Paul did now, was not contrary, but agreeable to his own declarations at other times, and to his conduct upon other occasions, and to the directions, which he gave others.

First, What St. Paul now did was agreeable to his declarations at other times; and therefore, as we may be assured, was conformable to his settled judgment and persuasion, and not an artful, or hypocritical compliance, proceeding from fear, or calculated to subserve some private and selfish views.

He was a Jew. The rites prescribed by the law of Moses were in their own nature indifferent. He [a] practised them now, as such, not as things necessary to his own, or any other men's salvation. This his conduct therefore is agreeable to his declarations at other times. Thus it follows after the words before quoted from the beginning of the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Galatians; where he so earnestly dissuades them from taking upon them the yoke of the law, as necessary to justification and salvation. "For, [says he ver. 5, 6,] we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness through faith. For in Christ Jesus," or according to the tenour of the Christian dispensation, "neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision: but faith, which worketh by love." And afterwards, in the same epistle, ch. vi. 15, 16. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them, and upon the whole Israel of God." So he writes in an epistle, where he strongly asserts his own integrity, and earnestly exhorts those, to whom he is writing, "to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free." He might therefore very reasonably practise indifferent things, as lawful, when not insisted upon, as necessary to salvation.

Farther, the compliance, related in the place, which we are considering, was also agreeable to his avowed conduct upon other occasions.

So 1 Cor. ix. 20—22. "And unto the Jews became I as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law: to them that are without law, as without law,——that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

Here, in the history under consideration, we have an instance of that compliance and condescension, which in the just cited text from the first to the Corinthians, he openly declares to have been his frequent practice: and which he esteemed to be his duty, in order to gain and save men of every rank, and denomination. And what was now done by him, was done by the advice and recommendation of men of great candour, and great wisdom and understanding: friends to Paul who knew him well, favourable to the Gentiles and guardians of the church at Jerusalem.

"This do, [say they,] that all may know, that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing:" that is, that all may be satisfied that "thou dost not teach the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses: [nor say,] that it is unlawful for them to circumcise their children, and to walk after the customs: forasmuch as thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law." The meaning is not that he did always and constantly keep the law in all its appointments; but [b] that sometimes, or often, upon many occasions, he did not scruple so doing: and that he did not judge it sinful, or contrary to the doctrine of Christ, so to do: for, when Paul said to Peter, Gal. ii. 14. "If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews:" the meaning, certainly, is not that Peter always, and

[a] 'Factus sum Judæis tamquam Judæus, ut Judæos lucrifacerem,'——compassione misericordiæ, non simulatione fallaciæ——Nam utique Judæus erat. Christianus autem factus, non Judæorum sacramenta reliquerat, quæ convenienter ille populus et legitimo tempore quo oportebat, acceperat. Sed ideo susceperat ea celebranda, quum jam Christi esset discipulus, ut doceret non esse perniciosa his qui vellent, sicut a parentibus per legem acceperant, custodire, etiam quum in Christo credidissent; non tamen in eis jam constituerent spem salutis, quoniam per Dominum Jesum salus ipsa, quæ ipsis sacramentis significabatur, advenerat. Ideoque Gentibus, quod insuetos a fide revocarent onere gravi, et non necessario, nullo modo imponenda esse censebat — Aug. ad Hieron. ap. Hieron. ep. 67. T. IV. p. 605. And see Remarques de Beausobre sur le N. T. T. I. p. 414. at the end of the second ep. to the Corinthians.

[b] Ipsum vero Paulum non ad hoc id egisse, quod vel Timotheum circumcidit, vel Cenchreis votum persolvit vel Jerosolymis a Jacobo admonitus, cum eis qui voverant, legitima illa celebranda suscepit, ut putari videretur per ea sacramenta etiam Christianam salutem dari: sed ne illa quæ prioribus, ut congruebant temporibus, in umbris rerum futurarum Deus fieri jusserat, tanquam idololatriam Gentilium damnare crederetur, &c. Aug. ad Hieron. ep. 70. ib. p. 631, 632.

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in all things, lived after the manner of the Gentiles, but only sometimes. Take the words in that sense, which it seems most reasonable to do: and Paul's argument with the apostle Peter is sufficiently cogent.

And that Paul did sometimes "become to the Jews as a Jew," he says himself in the place just cited from the first epistle to the Corinthians. And some instances of his so acting are particularly recorded by St. Luke, beside that of which we are speaking. So, as before observed, "he took, and circumcised Timothy, the son of a Jewess, because of the Jews in those quarters." For his father being a Greek by nation and religion, all supposed that Timothy was as yet uncircumcised. Acts xvi. 1—3.

And afterwards, ch. xviii. 18—22. at Corinth. "Paul tarried there yet a good while; and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, having shorn his head in Cenchrea. For he had a vow. And he came to Ephesus —— When they desired him to tarry longer time there, he consented not; but bid them farewel, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return unto you again, if God will."[a]

This is an action much resembling that which was proposed to him by James, and the elders at Jerusalem. And so far as we are able to discern, it was performed by him, of his own accord, freely and voluntarily, without any compulsion, and without the advice and recommendation of any. And, I think, it must be reckoned full proof, that he did, upon some occasions, "walk orderly and keep the law."

Once more, finally, the complying conduct of Paul at Jerusalem was agreeable to the directions which he gave to others upon the like occasions.

We all know, that in his epistles he oftentimes earnestly exhorts the Gentile Christians, the strong among them in particular, not always to assert to the utmost their christian liberty: but to forbear it, when there was danger, lest any weaker brethren should be so offended as to fall. "I know, [says he in his epistle to the Romans, ch. xiv. 14—20.] and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, then walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God." See likewise what follows at the beginning of the next chapter.

Now therefore, at Jerusalem, Paul only put in practice the rules and directions which he had given unto others. He was a Jew, and he might perform such acts, as were in themselves indifferent, without sin. If he was not under the law of Moses, he was under the law of charity, by which all Christians were bound. And, as in respect to that obligation, he had exhorted Gentile believers, not unseasonably to assert their liberty, he was in like manner obliged to condescend himself. Here was such a case. If ever there could be such a case, it must be here, at Jerusalem. And, if he had not complied, as he did, he must have run the hazard of offending a great number of the Jewish believers, his brethren, so as to cause them to fall, and fill their minds with prejudices against the dispensation of the gospel. According to the rules, just seen by us, as given to the Romans; he was obliged to act now as he did. If he had not, he would not have "followed the things that make for peace, and wherewith one may edify another." If he never practised condescension, compliance, yielding to the infirmities of the weak; how could he propose himself as an example to others; as he does, after a long exhortation at the end of the tenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians? not now to refer to other texts: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they might be saved."

[a] Of Paul's vow at Cenchrea there is a particular account in Vol. I. p. 114, &c.

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I hope, I have now vindicated St. Paul. But there still remains one observation more, which may be not improperly mentioned here.

9. From the explication, which has been given of the apostolic decree, and from all that has been now largely observed upon it, we may be able to discern the reason, why the epistle of the council of Jerusalem is never particularly mentioned by Paul, nor James, nor Peter, nor John, nor Jude, in their epistles.

There was no necessity of so doing, partly, because it may be supposed, that all Christians in general were already acquainted with it: and partly, because the regulations, therein contained, are not, strictly speaking, any part of the christian religion, or everlasting gospel, which is to be in force to the end of time: but only prudential rules and directions, suited to the circumstances of the christian church at that time. However, I think, there is a reference to it in Rev. ii. 24.

Another reason, why Paul, and other apostles do not expressly mention that epistle, or the decree in it, though they recommend like rules, or deliver cautions very suitable to it (as St. Paul certainly does, and very often) may be, that, by virtue of their apostolic commission, they were each one of them qualified to deliver prudential rules and directions.

Which observation may be of use for enabling us to understand some expressions of St. Paul, in the seventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and perhaps elsewhere. "To the rest speak I, not the Lord," ver. 12, and, "I have no commandment of the Lord. Yet I give my judgment, [or opinion, γνωμην,] as one that has obtained mercy to be faithful," ver. 25; and, "after my judgment," or according to my opinion, κατα την εμην γνωμην. "And I think also, that I have the spirit of God," ver. 40. That is, he knew, and thought it could not be reasonably called in question by any Christians, that, beside authority to declare the gospel of Christ, he was also endowed with wisdom and power, to deliver prudential counsels, suited to the state of things. And, when he delivers them, he uses such expressions, as show, they were not properly a part of the christian doctrine, but only directions and counsels, adapted to the exigence of things at that time. "I suppose therefore, that this is good for the present distress," ver. 26. necessity, or exigence, whilst the profession of the faith is exposed to so many difficulties. "And this I speak for your profit: not that I might cast a snare upon you," ver. 35. that is, 'I speak this with a sincere view to your good: not intending, however, any thing above 'your ability to perform: of which you must be the best judges, after seriously weighing the 'case.'

CHAP. VIII.

PAGE 201. Diss. L. 'Whether St. Paul did really blame St. Peter for his conduct, mentioned Gal. ii?'

That St. Peter was culpable, is allowed by our author. Wherein his fault consisted, was shown[a] formerly, and again in[b] these Remarks.

Page 202. 'The only difficulty seems to be,' says our learned author, 'with regard to Pe-'ter's motive for this conduct, which possibly might be this. He had been charged before at 'Jerusalem, on account of his eating with uncircumcised Gentiles, and vindicated himself to 'the satisfaction of the assembly. Acts xi. But he had done that in a more private manner, 'which rendered him less obnoxious to the zealous Jews.'

There is no reason to say, that was done in a more private manner. It was very public, as appears from the history in the tenth and eleventh chapters of the Acts of the apostles. Nothing could be done more publicly among Christians at that time. When Peter, by divine direction, went from Joppa to Cornelius at Cesarea, he took with him six brethren, who were witnesses to all that was done at the house of Cornelius. There Peter tarried several days. Before he returned to Jerusalem, "the apostles and brethren that were in Judea," by whom must be meant the whole church at Jerusalem, or a large part of it, "heard, that the Gentiles also had received

[a] In Vol. III. ch. xviii. sect. 3. [b] P. 513, &c.

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the word. And when Peter came to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order to them." His discourse there follows at length. And in the council St. Peter speaks of this transaction openly, and as a thing well known to all. Acts xv. 7. "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them: Men and brethren, ye know, how that God a good while ago made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."

There is no reason therefore, to insinuate, that this was done in a more private manner. But learned men, when engaged in an argument, are too apt to advance some things to serve a present purpose. Which should be carefully avoided by sincere inquirers after truth.

Page 203. 'Afterwards, when Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem about the dispute 'raised at Antioch concerning the Gentile converts, and Paul took Titus with him; he would 'not consent that Titus should be circumcised, though some pretended Jewish converts, who 'probably crept into the assembly, when that matter was debated, insisted upon it. These seem 'to have been different persons from the believing pharisees, who are mentioned as being at 'that assembly. But, as they are said to have believed, he would not, one would think, have 'here called them "false brethren," though they joined likewise in insisting upon the circum-'cision of Titus.'

By "the false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage," Gal. ii. 4. Paul means no others, than [a] those who began the disturbance at Antioch, of whom it is said, Acts xv. 1—— "Certain men came down from Judea, who taught the brethren, and said: Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved:" who at ver. 5, are said to be "pharisees that believed."

Nor can I see, why St. Paul should make any scruple to call them "false brethren," who are so censured by the apostles and elders, and the whole council at Jerusalem, who say of them: "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain men, which went out from us, have troubled you with words, subverting your souls——to whom we gave no such commandment."

Nor does it appear, that there was any dispute about Titus, in particular, either at *Antioch*, or at Jerusalem. But Paul, to satisfy the Galatians of his inviolable steadiness upon all occasions, inserts this fact in his narration: that he took Titus with him to Jerusalem, and brought him thence again, uncircumcised.

P. 203, 204. 'But after this, when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, Peter coming 'thither, for some time did eat with the Gentile converts. This conduct of Peter could not but 'make much noise, and give offence to the converted Jews, who were yet zealous for their law. 'Which being heard at Jerusalem, might occasion much uneasiness there among that sort of 'persons. And this might occasion James to send some persons to Antioch, to acquaint Peter 'with it: who, to avoid the ill consequences, which he apprehended would follow from thence, 'might think proper to alter his conduct, and also to induce Barnabas, and other Jews, to do 'the like.'

In my opinion, all this is abundantly too conjectural. Many things are here said without ground. Why should Peter's eating with Gentiles at Antioch presently make much noise? It was doing no more than might be reasonably expected of him, especially after the decisions of the council at Jerusalem, as Dr. W—— allows this to have been, p. 202. Nor is there any reason to believe, that tidings of Peter's eating with Gentiles at Antioch had been brought to Jerusalem. Peter, as it seems, stayed now but a short time only in that city. And the Jews mentioned, Gal. ii. 12. may have come to Antioch upon business, or purely to gratify their curiosity. There is no reason at all to bring in James, and make him either a cause, or an occasion of the alteration of Peter's behaviour. "Before that certain came from James." The

[a] '"And that, because of false brethren," who came 'down to Antioch, Acts xv. 1. "unawares brought in," in-'sinuating themselves into the church at Antioch. "Who 'came in privily to spy out our liberty," from the observance 'of the Jewish law, which we have in Christ Jesus, that 'they might bring us into bondage" to it: they pleading for 'the necessity of circumcising the Gentiles, and commanding 'them to keep the law, Acts xv. 5.' Whitby upon Gal. ii. 4. See also Doddridge upon the same place.

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meaning of these words is no more than 'when certain men came down from Jerusalem, where 'James was.' As [a] is allowed by the best interpreters.

Peter was culpable, as is evident. And he was justly and openly reproved by Paul. And Peter acquiesced. But we will not acquiesce. And rather than not make out an apology for him, we attempt to bring in another apostle to be partner in guilt with him: though the history affords not any ground or reason for so doing.

Without any curious researches, and groundless conjectures, Peter's alteration of conduct is easily accounted for from the well-known zeal of the Jewish people in general, and of too many of the Jewish believers. As formerly [b] said: 'I imagine, that he now first of all went 'abroad out of Judea into Gentile countries. It is probable, that he was desirous to see the 'christian people at Antioch. But hitherto he had not been much used to converse with 'Gentiles. And when some zealous Jew believers came to Antioch from Jerusalem, he was 'alarmed: recollecting, it is likely, how some at Jerusalem had contended with him after he 'was come from Cesarea, because "he had eaten with men uncircumcised," Acts xi. 1—3. and 'very well knowing, from long and frequent experience, the prevailing temper of the people of 'his country.'

CHAP. IX.

PAGE 208. Diss. li. 'What is the meaning of Paul's expression, "You see how large a letter 'I have written unto you with my own hand," Gal. vi. 11.

This question has been considered by many interpreters, and other learned men. I likewise have had occasion to speak to [c] it. And I think, I have said what is sufficient to show, that our English version is very right.

[a] 'Quum venirent quidam a Jacobo.'] Id est, ab Hierosolymis, cui ecclesiæ tum præsidebat Jacobus. A Jacobo, id est, ab eo loco ubi erat Jacobus, &c. Grot. ad Gal. ii. 12. a Jacobo.] id est, Hierosolymis, ubi pedem fixerat Jacobus. Bez. in loc.

[b] Vol. III. chap. xviii. sect. 3.

[c] See Vol. III. chap. xii. sect. 3.

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OBSERVATIONS

UPON

DR. MACKNIGHT'S HARMONY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS:

AS FAR AS RELATES TO THE HISTORY OF OUR SAVIOUR'S RESURRECTION.

IN A LETTER TO THE AUTHOR.

REVEREND SIR,

I INTEND to send you some observations upon your Harmony of the four Gospels, relating to the history of our Saviour's resurrection. They will regard these several sections of your work, sect. 149—156. If my thoughts are somewhat different from yours, I do not know, that you have any good reason to be offended. You have made a "New Harmony of the Gospels," after many others, and very different from them in many respects. Another therefore may have a right after you, and may think himself to represent the sense of the evangelists as it appears to him.

My observations will relate to the several following articles. 1. The burial of our Saviour. 2. The request of the chief priests and pharisees, to Pilate the governor, to afford them a guard for the security of the sepulchre. 3. A visit to the sepulchre, which you suppose to have been intended, and attempted by the women from Galilee, but not performed by them. 4. The preparing the spices by those women to anoint the body of the Lord Jesus. 5. Their journey to the sepulchre, and the appearances of our Lord to them, and others, after his resurrection.

I. 'Of the burial of our Saviour,' which is related by all the evangelists, but by St. John more particularly than by any of the rest. Matt. xxvii. 57—61. Mark xv. 42—47. Luke xxiii. 50—56. John xix. 38—42.

But here I do not stay, not intending to make any remarks upon this beside what may offer occasionally, in considering the other articles.

II. 'The request of the chief priests and pharisees to Pilate the governor, to afford them a guard for the security of the sepulchre.' Which is related by St. Matthew only, ch. xxvii. 62—66.

His words are these. "Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again: command therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead. So the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch. Go your way, and make it as sure as you can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."

Upon this you say, p. 618. 'Τη δε επαυριον, ητις εςι μετα την παρασκευην, "the next day that fol-'lowed the preparation," that is, after the sun was set. For the Jewish day began then. They took 'this measure therefore, not "on the morrow," in our sense of the word, but in the evening, 'after sun-setting, when the Jewish sabbath was begun, and when they understood the body 'was buried. To have delayed it to sun-rising, would have been preposterous, as the disciples 'might have stolen the body away during the preceding night.'

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This you say, contrary, as I suppose, to all interpreters and commentators whatever. Says Whitby: ' "Now the next day that followed the preparation," viz. the sabbath-day in the ' morning.' And in like manner other interpreters. But the thing is so plain, as scarcely to need any paraphrase or explication, and therefore is seldom found in commentators. But that the meaning of the original word is " the next day," according to our usual manner of speaking, is manifest from many texts, where it is found. So Acts xxv. 22, 23. " Then Agrippa said unto Festus: I would also hear the man myself. To-morrow, αυριον, said he, thou shalt hear him. On the morrow, τη αυ επαυριον, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth." I presume, that by " to-morrow, [or] on the morrow," is not meant the dark evening, or night, after sun-setting, but " the next day," when it was light, the only proper season for such an assembly, and the important design of it.

Acts iv. 5. " And it came to pass, that on the morrow, εγενετο δε επι την αυριον, their elders, and rulers, and scribes,—were gathered together." The context shows, that hereby is not meant the night-season, after sun-setting, but the next day, when it would be light. For it is said at ver. 3, " And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold until the next day, εις την αυριον. For it was now even-tide."

Acts x. 23, 24. " Then called he them in, and lodged them." And on the morrow, τη δε επαυριον, Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And on the morrow after, τη δε επαυριον, they entered into Cesarea." I do not see, how the word can be here understood of any thing, but the morning of the next day, after the rising of the sun. Nor do I think, that it ever was understood otherwise. See also ver. 9, and chap. xx. 7, xxii. 30, and other like places, which may easily be found by yourself, or any other, that wants farther satisfaction.

It seems to me somewhat strange, that you should misunderstand a phrase, which has in so many places, invariably, the same meaning, and has always been so understood. If the evangelist had intended the time mentioned by you, he would have expressed it, in some one of the phrases, not unusual in the gospels. He would have said: " And when the evening was now come, [or] when the sun was now set," of which examples may be seen Mat. xiv. 23. οψιας δε γενομενης. John vi. 16. ως δε οψια εγενετο. Mark i. 32. οψιας δε γενομενης, οτε εδυ ο ηλιος. Luke iv. 40. δυνοντος δε τυ ηλιυ.

And why do you affix this unheard of meaning to the word in Matt. xxvii. 62? Let us attend. ' To have delayed it to sun-rising would have been preposterous, as the disciples might ' have stolen the body away during the preceding night.' But, Sir, such reasonings are of no avail against the clear and express assertion of the evangelist, that the priests and pharisees did not go to Pilate, till the next day, or the morrow after our Saviour's crucifixion and burial.

And there are obvious reasons for such delay. The day, in which our Lord was crucified, had been a day of full employment, and great perplexity to Pilate. And the Jewish priests and pharisees might not judge it convenient to disturb him in the evening of it. Possibly this thought of a guard, to watch the sepulchre, came not into the minds of any of them that evening. Whenever the thought arose in the minds of one, or two, or some few of them, it would require time to propose it to others, and gather them together, to go with the request to Pilate. And the morning of the next day was soon enough. For they could none of them suspect the disciples to be so horribly profane and desperate, as to attempt to remove a dead body on the sabbath! They therefore made provision against the night that followed after the sabbath. Which was all that could be reckoned needful in the opinion of the most suspicious. Indeed, it is not easily supposable, that any of those Jews did really suspect the disciples of a design to steal the body. But they were willing to cast upon them the scandal of such a supposition, the more to bring them under popular resentment. But the contrivance turned out to their own disadvantage.

I seem to myself to have now made good the common interpretation of this text. I have advanced nothing new. On the next day, after the crucifixion of Jesus, and probably, in the morning of that day, some of the priests and pharisees went to Pilate, requesting a guard at the sepulchre, and he granted their request.

This paragraph of St. Matthew is so plain and easy, that I have found few notes upon it in

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commentators: scarcely any, excepting to show, that by "the day that followed the day of the preparation," is to be understood the Jewish sabbath. However Grotius has a note, that may be proper to be observed. It is to this purpose: 'The council could not sit on that day. But 'after a private consultation some of the priests and senators of the sect of the pharisees went to 'Pilate, as if they had somewhat to say to him of the utmost importance. Nor had they much 'difficulty to obtain what they requested.'

III. I now proceed to the next article of my inquiry, concerning 'a visit to the sepulchre, which you suppose to have been intended, and attempted by some of the women from Galilee, but not performed by them."

This is a visit or journey to the sepulchre, which I do not see in other commentators. Nor can I discern it in the gospels, after all that you have said in favour of it. A part of the title or contents of your 149th section, p. 619, is this: 'Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, go out to see the sepulchre: but are terrified by an earthquake.'

P. 620. 'Matt. xxviii. 1. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first 'day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre," θεωρησαι, 'to see, if the stone was still at the door, because by that they could know, whether the body 'was within. For from John xix. 42. it would appear, that the friends of Jesus intended to 'carry him somewhere else——The women knowing this, had reason to think, that Joseph 'would remove the body, as soon as the sabbath was ended. Accordingly, having bought the 'spices, they judged it proper to send two of their number, to see, if Jesus was still in the se-'pulchre: and, if he was not, to inquire of the gardener where he was laid: that when the 'spices were prepared,——they might go directly to the place, and embalm him.'

All fiction, surely! Nor do I, as before said, find this in any commentators, with whom I am acquainted. However, let us see what this ingenious author says to support it.

P. 620, 621. 'This journey to the sepulchre, by the two Marys, is generally supposed to 'have been undertaken in the morning, according to our sense of the word, that is to say, some 'time after midnight. But this opinion, though universally received, may be justly called in 'question. For, first of all, what reason can be assigned for the women not going to see the 'sepulchre, as soon as the Jewish sabbath was ended, that is, on Saturday, immediately after 'sun-setting, when they had more than an hour's twilight to carry them thither?'

To which I answer, that they could not go then, because the spices were not yet prepared. For I shall show presently, that they were not bought, till after the Jewish sabbath was ended.

You go on: 'In the second place, since they delayed it at all, why did they go at two or 'three in the morning, rather than at some more seasonable time?' You should not say, at 'two or three in the morning.' For that is not the time intended by the expositors, with whom you are arguing. You should say, 'four or five in the morning.' So the evangelist tells us, the women set out early, "at the dawning of the day," that is, between four and five in the morning, according to our way of computation. They could not go sooner with decency. And, if the body was to be embalmed, it was proper to take the first opportunity, and perform it as soon as could be conveniently done after decease. This, I think, accounts for the women's going to the sepulchre, early in the morning, at the time supposed by all commentators in general. They would have anointed the body sooner, if they had not been prevented by the coming in of the Jewish sabbath. That being over, and the spices prepared, they embrace the earliest season for going to the sepulchre.

Still you say, p. 621: 'The reader will be pleased to take notice, that the time here fixed 'for the women's first visit to the sepulchre, is capable of direct proof likewise from the words 'of the text. Matt. xxviii. 1. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the 'first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." Ac-'cording to the Jewish form of the day, the sabbath ended, and the first day of the week began 'at sun-setting, Lev. xxiii. 32. If so, Matthew's description of the time, when the women set 'out for the sepulchre, fixeth it expressly to the evening, notwithstanding the word "dawn," 'in our translation, falsely protracts it to some hour after midnight, being very improperly used 'in this passage. The word in the original is επιφωσκουσῃ. Which applied to the Jewish day,

[a] Non potuit eo die synedrium haberi. Sed privato consilio sacerdotum principes quidam et senatores aliqui, Pharisaïcæ factionis, Pilatum conveniunt, tamquam acturi de negotio ad summam rempublicam pertinente. Nec difficulter ab eo impetrârunt rem, in quâ ille nihil situm existimabat. Gr. in Matt. xxvii. 62.

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'signifies simply, that "the day began," without conveying any idea of light at all. Contrary, 'I own, to its primary meaning, which doubtless includes the notion of light, gradually increasing 'in conformity to the commencement of the day among the Greeks, who formed the word, so 'as to denote their own idea. But however contrary to the analogy of the Greek language, this 'signification of the word, επιφωσκουσῃ, may seem, it could have no other in the mouth of a Jew, 'whose days all began at sun-setting. Besides, it has this meaning without dispute, Luke 'xxiii. 54, where in the history of our Lord's burial, it is said: "And that day was the day of 'the preparation, and the sabbath dawned," επεφωσκε, that is, was about to begin: or, as it is well 'rendered in our version, "drew on." For nobody ever fancied, that Joseph of Arimathea, and 'Nicodemus laid Jesus in the sepulchre, when the Jewish sabbath "dawned," in the sense of its 'becoming light. But the meaning which this Greek word has in Luke, it may have in 'Matthew, or rather must have: as it cannot be imagined that an historian, capable of common 'accuracy, much less an inspired writer, would say, 'it dawned toward the first day of the 'week,' nine or ten hours after the first day of the week began.'

I have made this long quotation that I might set your argument in its full light, and that you might not complain that justice had not been done to it. In answer to all which I say: all know very well, that the Jewish civil day, or νυχθημερον, began at the setting of the sun. But that day was divided into two parts, *night and day*, by *day* meaning the natural day, or that part of the civil day which is light. This sense of the word *day* is very common in scripture. Ps. lxxiv. 16. "The day is thine, the night also is thine." John xi. 9, 10. "Jesus answered: Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of the world. But if he walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." In Matt. xx. 1—16, is a parable of the labourers hired to work in a vineyard "for a penny a day:" meaning a day of twelve hours, whilst it is light, and a proper season for labour. Luke iv. 42. "And when it was day, γενομενης δε ημερας, he departed, and went into a desert place." Acts xii. 18. "Now, as soon as it was day, γενομενης δε ημερας, there was no small stir among the soldiers." Where, "as soon as it was day," cannot mean the Jewish civil day, but *day-light*. All which is agreeable to that ancient and original determination of the Deity himself. Gen. i. 5. "And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night."

Need I add any more examples? They are easily had, Luke vi. 13. "And when it was day, και οτε εγενετο ημερα, he called unto him his disciples." Acts xxvii. 29. "They cast four anchors out of the ship, and wished for the day." ηυχοντο ημεραν γενεσθαι. Ver. 33. "And while the day was coming on, αχρι δε ου εμελλεν ημερα γενεσθαι, Paul besought them all to take meat." I add no other texts, but that of 2 Peter i. 19. "Until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." εως ου ημερα διαυγασῃ, και Φωσφορος ανατειλῃ εν καρδιαις υμων.

That must be the meaning of the text in Matt. xxviii. 1. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." With which I suppose to be parallel, Mark xvi. 1, 2. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun."

I beg leave to refer you to Grotius. And I intend to transcribe below the observations of [a] Keuchenius, which appear to me to be very material.

I allow your interpretation of Luke xxiii. 54, to be right. But there the word, επεφωσκε, is used figuratively, and improperly, though elegantly, and significantly enough. I say improperly, for you yourself say, p. 621, 'That according to its primary meaning, doubtless, the word 'includes the notion of light gradually increasing.'

However, after all, you say, that this journey of which you are here speaking, though undertaken, was not performed.

[a] Matt. xxviii. 1. Τῃ επιφωσκουσῃ εις μιαν σαββατων, &c. Bene monuit vir illustris H. Grotius, phrasim hanc passim de solis luce usurpari. Ad quam sententiam adstruendam non possum non producere insignem locum, qui occurrit Neh. viii. 3. ubi Esras in libro legis fertur legisse a 'luce usque ad medium diei.' Quod 70 Senes hoc modo vertunt: Και ανεγνω εν αυτῳ απο της ὡρας του διαφωτισαι τον ἡλιον εως ἡμισους της ἡμερας. Unde liquet, Interpretes hos per 'lucem,' non nisi 'solis lucem' vel 'ortum' intellexisse. Conf. LXX. ad Job xxxi. 16. Et sane non 'diluculum,' sed 'solis' potius 'ortum,' hac locutione designari, ex re ipsâ manifestum est. Dicitur enim Esras coram populo legisse, 'a luce.' Quod non tam facile a primâ lucis apparitione, quam a solis ortu factum fuisse, percipi potest. Quapropter arbitror, phrasim hanc idem fere significare, quod apud Marcum cap. xvi. 2. λιαν πρωϊ, της μιας σαββατων ανατειλαντος του ἡλιου. Pet. Keuchen. in N. T. p. 157.

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You proceed therefore at p. 622, 623. 'For these reasons I think it probable, that the two 'Marys attempted to visit the sepulchre in the end of the Jewish sabbath, or about the setting 'of the sun, on our Saturday evening. I say, attempted to visit the sepulchre, because it does 'not appear that they actually went thither. While they were going, there was a great earth-'quake. This earthquake, I suppose, frightened the women to such a degree, that they imme-'diately turned back. Or their return may have been rendered necessary by a storm, if this 'earthquake was attended with a storm—— The guards, it is true, remained at the sepulchre all 'the while. But there was a great difference between the tempers of the persons——.'

That these women did not go, you argue in this manner, in the notes, at p. 624. 'It is true,' Matthew says, 'that the women "came to see the sepulchre." But the word ηλθε, which he 'makes use of, does not imply that they arrived at the sepulchre. All, who understand the 'Greek, know that ελθειν signifies *to go*, as well as *to come*. See Mark vii. 31. Luke ii. 44, in 'the original.'

Well, let us look into Mark vii. 31. "And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis." But how is this to your purpose? Translate *he went*, instead of *he came:* still he actually arrived at the place here spoken of, "the sea of Galilee." He did not attempt only, but he went.

Again Luke ii. 44. "But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went, ηλθον, a day's journey." Allowing that to be the right reading, still Joseph and Mary did actually *go* "a day's journey," and not attempt it only.

So it must be here also. "At the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came, [or went] Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." They did go. Consequently, the journey 'attempted, but not performed,' at the setting of the sun, is a fiction, without any foundation: for St. Matthew speaks of a journey, or visit to the sepulchre, which these women actually made, early in the morning. Which visit shall be observed by and by, as related by the evangelists.

For the present, I stay a while, to make some reflections. For, sir, I cannot forbear to complain of you, and expostulate with you. Is this to do honour to the sacred history? In support of this fictitious journey, 'attempted, but not performed,' you have made many suppositions, without any authority from the evangelists. I shall observe some of them as distinctly as *I* can, in so perplexed an argument as yours is.

Supp. 1. You say, 'From John xix. 42, it would appear, that the friends *of* Jesus intended 'to carry him somewhere else.' p. 620.

Supp. 2. You suppose that the women knew this. Your words, in the same page, are: 'The 'women knowing this, had reason to think that Joseph would remove the body as soon as the 'sabbath was ended.'

Where is your authority for these suppositions? If the friends of Jesus intended to carry him somewhere else, and the women knew this, that intention would have manifested itself when the women came to the sepulchre, and missed the body: or when John and Peter came thither, and likewise found not the body. If they had before known, that such a removal was intended by any of their own number, or by Joseph, they would not have been in such surprise at not finding the body, as they were. Some of them would presently have said: 'The body indeed is gone. But we need not be very uneasy about it. Undoubtedly Joseph has removed it to some other place, and taken good care of it. Let us therefore go to him and inquire.' But no such speeches as these drop from any of them. When Mary Magdalene had been at the sepulchre, and saw the stone to be taken away, and the body not within: "she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre. And we know not where they have laid him," John xx. 1, 2. She did not suppose that to have been done by friends, but by strangers, whom she knew nothing of. And Peter, as related by St. Luke xxiv. 12. "ran to the sepulchre, and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

Nevertheless this notion of the intention of Joseph, or the disciples, to remove the body elsewhere, has taken such possession of your mind, that in your argument to support the early attempted journey, you impute to the women an apprehension, that the body had been removed even during the sabbath, and before it ended. For you say, p. 621, 'It is much more probable 'that by appointment of the rest, and in conformity to their own inclinations, the two set out

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'for the sepulchre on Saturday evening, according to our form of the day, perhaps, at about six 'or seven at night.' And p. 620. 'Accordingly, having bought the spices, they judged it 'proper to send two of their number, to see if Jesus was still in the sepulchre, and if not, 'to inquire of the gardener where he was [a] laid.' And at the top of p. 621, you ask, 'What 'reason can be assigned for the women's not going to see the sepulchre, as soon as the Jewish 'sabbath was ended, that is, on Saturday immediately after sun-setting, when they had more 'than an hour's twilight to carry them thither?' And at the bottom of p. 622, you suppose this visit was attempted, 'In the end of the Jewish sabbath, or about the setting of the sun, on our 'Saturday evening.'

Therefore, before their setting out, which, according to you, was, 'as soon as the Jewish sabbath was ended, immediately after sun-setting, or about the setting of the sun,' they had a suspicion that Joseph had already removed the body, and were in great doubt about it; but, if at that time they had any suspicion or doubt whether the body was 'still in the sepulchre,' they must have had a suspicion, that it had been removed by Joseph, before the sabbath was over. But I apprehend, that none could admit in their minds any suspicion, that a pious Jew (as Joseph certainly was) would remove a dead body on the sabbath day!

Supp. 3. p. 623. 'While they were going, there was a great earthquake.' For this you have no authority from the gospels. The women as you say, set out for the sepulchre at 'about six or seven in the evening, immediately after sun-setting.' But there is no reason to think from St. Matthew, or any other evangelist, that there was an earthquake at Jerusalem at that time. The earthquake, of which you speak, must have happened soon after the women set out, near Jerusalem, and early in the evening, which seems not to be the time of the earthquake mentioned by St. Matthew.

Supp. 4. You say, p. 624, 'This earthquake, I suppose, terrified the women to such a 'degree that they immediately turned back.' 'Yet the guards remained at the sepulchre all 'the while.' Suppositions for which there is no ground: for there is no intimation in the gospels that any of the women followers of Jesus were affrighted by an earthquake: nor that the Roman soldiers stayed near the sepulchre, after the earthquake mentioned by St. Matthew, which is the only earthquake spoken of at all about this season. Nor is it said, that the soldiers were seen by the women, or by the disciples, who came to the sepulchre, early in the morning.

Supp. 5. You say, at p. 625, 'That the angel's appearance was ushered in with a great 'earthquake and a storm, which lasted several hours.' I do not see any intimation of this long storm in the gospels. It is a contrivance of yours, to support your fictitious journey, begun and attempted, but not finished, early in the evening, soon after sun-setting. The earthquake, mentioned by St. Matthew, was sudden and instantaneous, or however, of no long duration, immediately preceding, or accompanying the appearance of the [b] angel.

Supp. 6. In arguing for this imaginary journey, you suppose, that for a while the weather was cloudy and rainy. Your words at p. 621, are, 'To conclude, it cannot be said, that this 'journey was too great to be undertaken in the evening: for the sepulchre was nigh to the city. 'John xix. 20. It may be said indeed, that it was always full moon at the passover: and there- 'fore that the middle of the night was as proper a season for their visit as any. It would not, 'however, be a proper season, if the weather was either rainy or cloudy then, as it seems actually 'to have been. This I gather from John xx. 1, where we are told, that in the morning, when 'Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre, it was dark.'

But those words "early [or in the morning] when it was yet dark," πρωὶ σκοτιας ετι ουσης, denote no more, than that it was not yet full day-light, or that the sun was not risen, or, according to Dr. Clarke's paraphrase: 'Very early, before it was yet day-light.' To the same purpose are the two Latin versions of Beza and the Vulgate, which here agree exactly. Maria Magdalene venit mane, cum adhuc tenebræ essent. Those words do not denote the temperature of the air, but the time of the day.

However of the bad weather at that time, you speak also in some other places, particularly

[a] And just before, at the top of p. 620, you say, 'The 'women went to "see the sepulchre," (θεωρησαι) to see if the 'stone was still at the door, because by that they could know 'whether the body was within.'

[b] 'Terræ motus factus est magnus.'] Motus hic signum fuit secuturæ οπτασιας, satis notum Judaïco populo. Ps. lxviii. 8, 9. xcix. 1. cxiv. 6, 7. Grot. ad Matt. xxviii. 2.

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p. 643. 'The storm, the earthquake, and the vision that accompanied this astonishing event, 'had driven the soldiers away from the sepulchre. Impelled therefore by their fears and the 'weather, they would take shelter in the first house they could find. And as they fled away 'about the time that Jesus arose, they would, probably, sleep till morning. Or, though the 'terror they were in hindered them from sleeping, they would stay nevertheless, having no incli- 'nation to go out in such a stormy night.'

So you are pleased to write. Nevertheless I discern not any intimations in the evangelists what the weather was at that time. And if the evangelists have said nothing about it, we can form no determinations concerning it. And for aught that is said by them during the period of our Lord's lying in the grave, it may have been all calm and serene, till the time appointed for his rising out of it. When on a sudden, there was a forcible concussion of the earth and air, preceding, or accompanying the presence of the angel, who descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre. After which also, so far as we know, the air was calm and serene. For the women, and some of the disciples, came early out of the city to the sepulchre, without any difficulties arising from bad weather, so far as we can observe.

The several suppositions above mentioned, appear to me to be made by you altogether without any ground or foundation from the evangelists: and therefore they are unjustifiable, and must be of bad consequence. What history can stand before such treatment? It must be perverted. It will be altered, and made somewhat very different from what it really is. Heedless and inattentive readers (of which there are too many) are amused and entertained, and not carefully consulting the original, they admit such suppositions as parts of the history, though they are not mentioned nor implied in it.

IV. I now proceed to my fourth inquiry, which relates to 'the preparing the spices by the women from Galilee to anoint the body of Jesus.'

The accounts which we have of this are in two evangelists only. St. Mark having at the end of ch. xv. said: "And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joses, beheld where he was laid," begins the xvi. chapter in this manner: "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought [or brought] sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him." St. Luke xxiii. 55, 56. xxiv. 1. "And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and *how* the body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them."

I understand that narrative in this manner. When the crucifixion was over, and the women here spoken of had seen our Lord laid in the sepulchre, they returned to Jerusalem, to their apartment there, and rested on the sabbath day, which was now coming on, if not already begun. And when the sabbath was over, in the evening they bought sweet spices, and early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they went to the sepulchre, carrying the spices with them. in order to anoint the body, according to their intention.

Your way of reconciling these two accounts is this. P. 617. 'This is not inconsistent with 'Mark xvi. 1, where we are told, that they bought spices after the sabbath was ended. It 'seems, the quantity, which according to Luke had been provided and prepared on the night 'of the crucifixion, was too small: or the sabbath coming on, they had not time to procure all 'the ingredients that were necessary. For which reason they went the first day of the week, 'and bought more.'

I rather think, that all the spices which they wanted were bought at once, and in the evening, after the sabbath was ended, as St. Mark says. Nor need St. Luke to be otherwise understood. You can help us out here. For you say, Prelim. Obser. iii. p. 14. 'Matthew and Luke 'giving the history of our Lord's public entry into Jerusalem, connect the purging the temple 'therewith, as if both happened in one day. Nevertheless, from the more particular account 'which Mark gives of these affairs, it appears, that on the day of his public entry, Jesus did not 'go into the temple till the evening, when the market, usually kept in the court of the 'Gentiles, which he intended to prohibit, was over, and that he did not reform this abuse till 'the next day.'

So it is here. Nor is St. Luke to be understood to say, that they prepared any spices that

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day. He is to be understood in this manner. 'And they returned, and prepared spices and 'ointments. Nevertheless they rested the sabbath day, according to the commandment. And 'deferred preparing them till that was over.'

In your Chronological Dissertations, p. 88. You say: 'Luke also insinuates, that Jesus was 'crucified on the preparation of the passover. For he tells us, ch. xxiii. 56, that when the 'women had viewed our Lord's sepulchre, and how his body was laid, "they returned, and 'rested according to the commandment." It seems the sabbath began about the time they were 'at the sepulchre.'

Which indeed I take to be the truth of the case. By the time the funeral rites were finished, and whilst they were yet at the sepulchre, the day closed, the sun set, and the sabbath came on. After which the women, and the other company there present, might without any scruple of their own, and without offence to others, walk thence to their apartments, or their habitations, at Jerusalem. But after that, no work could be done until after the sabbath was over.

Nor do I see how it could be otherwise. For our Lord did not expire, as all allow, till the "ninth hour of the day," or our three after noon, "there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple. He went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus: then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered." Compare Mark xv. 42—45, and Luke xxiii. 50—53, and John xix. 38. But we are told by St. Mark, in the place just referred to, that when Joseph presented that request, "Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling for the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. And when he knew it, he gave the body to Joseph." That would take up some time. For the centurion, undoubtedly, was at the place of execution, attending the bodies. Nor could he remove from that place without special order from the governor himself. Whether by "calling for the centurion," be intended, that Pilate commanded him to come to him, that he might himself speak to him: or whether there be only meant, that Pilate sent a messenger to the centurion, and received an answer from him by that messenger, I do not determine: either way some time was required to give Pilate satisfaction upon this head.

Nevertheless, I will suppose that much time was not lost by that means: for Joseph and Nicodemus might take it for granted that the body would not be refused, but would be delivered to them at their request: and [a] immediately after the Lord Jesus had expired, they might begin to make preparations for his burial. However, the performing the funeral rites, as related by St. John, might fully occupy the space of time that followed, till sun-setting. Nor is it conceivable that the women could get back to Jerusalem before the sabbath was begun, or very near beginning, at the soonest, that is, the time of sun-setting, or our six after noon.

At p. 620, you speak of the women *pounding* and *mixing* the spices. 'Accordingly, having 'bought the spices, they judged it proper to send two of their number to see if Jesus was still in 'the sepulchre——that when the spices were prepared, that is, pounded, mixed, and melted into 'an ointment, they might go directly to the place and embalm him.'

I cannot believe that there was any occasion for this. These women were not inhabitants of Jerusalem, but had come up thither with our Lord as attendants upon him at the time of the passover. I see not how they should be furnished with pestles and mortars, and other vessels for pounding, mixing, and melting spices. I rather think they bought spices already mixed into an ointment, prepared and fitted for the use intended by them. In countries where embalming was in use, and where they buried soon after men had expired, and especially in great cities, and near them, such as Jerusalem, there must have been shops, or warehouses of apothecaries, or embalmers or confectioners, where spices of all sorts, proper for funeral rites, and also bandages and rollers might be had, and upon the shortest notice, for all sorts of persons, according to their several circumstances. We have an instance of this in the burial of our Saviour. His crucifixion and death were unlooked for by his friends. Nevertheless, as soon as he had expired, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came to the place, "bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. And they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, [or bandages,] with spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury"—— ἐδησαν αὐτο ὀθονιοις.

[a] Apparemment que Joseph fit ses appareils, et assembla les gens dont il avoit besoin pour la sépulture de Jésus Christ, dès qu'il le vit crucifié. Le Clerc sur Marc xv. 42.

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And that the Jews of that time buried soon after decease, we see in the instances of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 1—10. It also appears in the history of Lazarus. John xi. 39. "Jesus said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him who was dead, saith unto him: Lord, by this time he smelleth: for he has been dead four days." Τεταρταιος γαρ εςι. You, Sir, are pleased to say in your Harmony, sect. c. p. 418: 'When Jesus and his disciples were come nigh to 'Bethany, they heard from some of the inhabitants that Lazarus was four days buried. Where-'fore, as a day or two must have been spent in making preparations for the burial, he could not 'well be less than five days dead when Jesus arrived.'

Your computation is wrong. Lazarus was buried on the day, in which he died. John xi. 17. "Then, when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already." But those days are not to be reckoned complete. It was the fourth day since he was buried, on which also he had died. You know very well how the sacred writers compute days. Matt. xii. 4. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." You do not thereby understand three complete days and nights. If Lazarus had been dead more than four days Martha would have said so. For corruption of bodies does not commence merely from the time of burial, but from the time of death. And, says Cyril of Alexandria, [a] 'Jesus brought Lazarus out of the grave, 'now dead, and stinking, on the fourth day after his death.' So says Cyril, who, as I think, must have understood Greek as well as any modern critics. This is the same computation of the time of Lazarus's death, which was made long ago in a tract [b] which you just now quoted with approbation.

These good women of Galilee, then, as I suppose, bought the spices they wanted, ready prepared, and mixed into an ointment, in the evening, after the sabbath was over. And, when they had so done, as I apprehend, they went to rest, trusting in God, as other good men and women do: that they might be composed, and the better fitted for the intended service of the ensuing day. This is to be understood, so far as was consistent with the greatness of their concern for what had lately happened to their much respected Lord and Master.

What these women designed, we cannot say exactly. But I dare say, it was not what you suppose, p. 617. 'That they might embalm their dead Lord by anointing and swathing him in 'a proper manner.' For I think, he was properly swathed, or rolled, before. And any alteration of the rollers, or bandages, would have been inconsistent with that respect, which was due to the body of Jesus. What they aimed at, I say, I do not know. But, possibly they intended to rub ointment on the outside of the bandages, to fill up the spaces, or interstices, which there might be, and to add to the fragrancy of the spices, which had been already made use of.

After all, I do not think it was any great matter, which was intended by them. And to me it seems, that you speak too slightly of what had been done by Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus. Your words at p. 617 are these: "The Galilean women, who had waited on Jesus in 'his last moments, and accompanied him to the sepulchre, observing, that his funeral rites were 'performed in a hurry, (the body being rolled in nothing but a mixture of myrrh and aloes, 'which Nicodemus brought) agreed among themselves to come when the sabbath was passed, 'and embalm their dead Lord, by anointing and swathing him in a proper manner. Accord-'ingly, when he was laid in the sepulchre, they returned to the city, and bought what other 'spices were necessary for that purpose: Nicodemus having furnished a mixture only of myrrh 'and aloes.'

I must take the liberty to say, this manner of speaking is unjustifiable, after the accounts which we have of our Lord's interment by all the evangelists, before referred to, and particularly by St. John, ch. xiv. 38—40. "After this Joseph of Arimathea—took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus,—and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pounds weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen cloths, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Ελαβον ουν το σωμα τυ Ιησυ, και εδησαν αυτο οθονιοις μετα των αρωματων, καθως εθος εςι τοις Ιουδαιοις ενταφιαζειν.

The funeral rites were performed with expedition, but not, properly speaking, in a hurry. And when St. John says that the "body was wound up in linen cloths, with the spices, as the

[a] Τον δυσωδη νεκρον, μετα τεταρτην της τελευτης ἡμεραν, εκ θηκης εξηγαγεν. Cyril in Jo. xi. 44. T. IV. p. 689.
[b] See Vindication of three of our Saviour's Miracles, against Woolston, page 344, note [b].

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manner of the Jews is to bury:" I think he means as they use to bury persons of distinction. For to such only spices and aromatic gums belong. I think, that to be implied also in the original word, ενταφιαζειν. Nor was Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, buried in that manner. His body was bound or swathed in rollers. But there was no mixture of spices. For he was supposed to smell after he had been dead not more than four days. And whereas you use the expression, 'rolled in nothing but a mixture of myrrh and aloes,' and again, 'a mixture only 'of myrrh and aloes:' I think there can be no reason to doubt that they were such spices, as were most proper for the purpose. So * says Grotius. And all was done, as may be reasonably supposed, after the best manner, by the hands of an apothecary, or confectioner, or perfumer, skilful in performing funeral rites. There must have been many such in Jerusalem. And those two great and rich men, Joseph and Nicodemus, would procure one of the best and most proper for the service intended by them. Such men as these seem to be meant in Eccles. xxxviii. 4, 7, 8. "The Lord has created medicines out of the earth—with such does the physician heal men, and take away their pains. Of such does the apothecary make a confection," or mixture, μιγμα, the word used by St. John. "And of his works there is no end." See Grotius upon the place. There must have been at Jerusalem several of this profession, Unguentarii, who were able to perform funeral rites in a proper manner, in the space of three hours. And Nicodemus and Joseph, would, besides, have the attendance of such of their servants as could be of any use upon this occasion. A representation of our Saviour's body, embalmed, and swathed and brought to the door of the sepulchre, may be seen in Chifflet. And I suppose, that the justness of the representation is allowed by antiquarians.

V. I come now to the fifth and last article of my inquiry, and the most important of all: 'the journey of these women to the sepulchre, and the appearances of our Lord to them, and 'to others after his resurrection.'

Here I cannot forbear saying, that your harmony of this part of the evangelical history is very perplexed, and intricate. Your words at p. 634. are these. 'It may seem strange, that 'in the accounts, which the evangelists have given of our Lord's resurrection, there is not the 'least mention made of the disciples meeting one another in the way, although they went seve-'ral times backward and forward, in separate companies, between their lodgings in the city and 'the sepulchre. On the contrary, the circumstances of the history, oblige us to suppose, that 'they did not meet one another. But there is nothing improbable in all this. For, as Jerusa-'lem was a great city, the apostles' lodging might be at the distance of a mile or two from that 'extremity of it, which was nearest to the sepulchre. And therefore from their lodging to the 'sepulchre there might be several different ways through the city, all equally convenient. Far-'ther, Calvary, where our Lord was crucified, is said to have been "nigh unto the city," John 'xix. 20. But it would be nigh, though it was at the distance of half a mile. Suppose it how-'ever to have been only a little more than a quarter of a mile. In this place, or nigh to it, '[εν τοτω] was the garden, where our Lord was buried, John xix. 41. Yet the garden might be 'on the side of Calvary, which was farthest from Jerusalem. Wherefore, as it was a spacious 'garden, the sepulchre could not well be nearer the city than half a mile. It may however 'have been at the distance of a whole mile, consistently enough with the description, which 'John has given of its situation. On either supposition, there may have been different roads 'from Joseph's villa and garden to the city. Besides, as Jerusalem was walled round, the 'apostles' lodging might be so situated, that persons going from thence to Joseph's garden, 'could come out of the city by different gates. To conclude, the garden, where the sepulchre 'was, might have more doors than one, and several shady walks in it, leading to the sepulchre. 'On these suppositions, it is easy to imagine, that the disciples and the women, who went to 'and from the sepulchre, may have missed each other by taking their rout through different 'streets of the city, or different roads in the field: or they may have been hid from one another 'by the shady walks of the garden, in which the sepulchre stood.'

So you write. But should you not have been led to suspect a scheme, which needs so many suppositions to support it? If the women and the disciples never met each other, in passing to and from the sepulchre, may it not afford reason to believe, that they did not make so many journeys separately, as you have supposed? How many of those journeys you have found in the

* ——μιγμα σμυρνης και αλοης. Quæ aromata ad hunc usum optima habebantur. Grot. ad Joan. xix. 39.

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evangelists, or ingeniously contrived for them; I should not be able to say distinctly, were it not for a note, which you have placed at the bottom of p. 657, 658, where you say: 'if the 'reader desires a more compendious view of the several journeys to the sepulchre, and of the 'relation, which they bear to one another, he may take it as follows.' Where you reckon twelve in number, the last of which is this: '12. In the evening, the disciples arrive from Emmaus, 'and while they are telling their story, Jesus himself appears.'

There are, undoubtedly, some real, or seeming difficulties in this part of the evangelical history. Which, as seems to me, have been of late increased and multiplied by annotators, and other writers, and not at all diminished by yourself. This being the case, I have found myself to be under a disability to unfold it by my own skill only. I have therefore, upon this occasion, had recourse to a learned and judicious friend: who, I before knew, had some uncommon observations upon this subject. The answer, with which he has favoured me, is to this purpose.

'I never could bring my mind to think, that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene sepa-'rately, but that his first appearance was to the watch: who, I think, saw the angel, and the 'rolling away of the stone, as well as felt the σεισμον μεγαν, attending the presence and action of the 'angel, for fear of whom the keepers did shake, and became ωσει νεκροι, "as dead men." Some 'of whom, as the same evangelist says, τινες της κεϛωδιας, "came into the city, and showed unto 'the chief priests all the things that were done." The appearance to Mary Magdalene, I 'think, was in common to her and to the other women, who went altogether to the sepulchre, and 'once only, not twice, as is generally supposed, and saw our Saviour, and were coming back to 'the city, with the account of what they had seen and heard to the apostles, at the same time, that 'some of the watch came to relate all that was done, to the chief priests. And they did make their 'report to the apostles, before the two went from the rest of the company to Emmaus. No 'notice is indeed mentioned by the two in discourse with Christ of the women's having related 'their interview with Jesus, because it should seem none of the company believed a word of 'what the women said, Mark xvi. 11. Luke xxiv. 11. And none of the evangelists pretend to 'give an exact detail of all circumstances.'

This I apprehend to be the truth, or nearly so. And it will be the key to this history. And I now intend to digest the several particulars of it, in their proper order, as well as I can. If I should at all differ from my friend, it will be in such points only as are not very material. And still I must acknowledge myself indebted to him for a clear insight into this history.

But before I enter upon the rehearsal of the several parts of this history, I must premise a few observations.

First of all, I reckon, I have showed, that your supposed journey of some of the women to the sepulchre, designed and begun, but not performed and finished, by them, about six or seven o'clock in the evening of Saturday, presently after the sabbath was over, is fictitious, and without foundation.

Secondly, You speak of a journey to the sepulchre made by some of the company of the apostles, who set out after Peter and John were gone. This you call, at p. 639, a second deputation from the apostles. You speak of it likewise at p. 633, 656, 657. I beg leave to say, that I cannot but consider this as a fiction, without any foundation. And perhaps I may take no farther notice of it hereafter.

Thirdly, You suppose St. Peter to have made a second visit to the sepulchre alone, different from that mentioned John xx. 3—10. This you argue from Luke xxiv. 12, at p. 646, 647. But I think it to be the same visit which is mentioned by St. John: when "Peter, and that other disciple," went together. So this also is understood by Le Clerc, and all other interpreters and commentators in general, so far as I know. Therefore my friend says in his letter to me: 'St. Luke 'xxiv. 12, mentions only Peter running to the sepulchre; but we do not conclude from thence, 'that he ran thither twice, once by himself, and at another time along with John.' However, it is your opinion that two visits are here spoken of. And indeed this is agreeable to the usual method of your harmony: in which you make two stories of one, and account such passages of the gospels to be different, which are really parallel. Whereby, in my opinion, and so far as I am able to judge, you have oftentimes perverted the true order of things related by the evangelists.

I now proceed to rehearse the several parts of this history, and to digest them in order as well as I can.

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Says St. John xx. 1. "The first day of the week, cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre."

But though Mary Magdalene only be here mentioned, I suppose, she was not alone. It is agreeable to what you say also p. 626. 'In the morning of the first day of the week, according to 'our form of the day, all the women went out together very early, carrying the spices which 'they had prepared to the sepulchre, at which they arrived about the rising of the sun.' See Matt. xxviii. 1. Mark xvi. 1, 2. Luke xxiv. 10. And at p. 627, you observe, 'The women 'said to have made this journey, are in all the evangelists the same——Mary Magdalene there-'fore, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, are the women, who made the visit with the 'spices early in the morning. John indeed speaks of none of the women who made this visit to 'the sepulchre, but Mary Magdalene. Yet because he mentions none but her, it does not follow, 'that there was nobody with her. In the gospels there are many such omissions——Where-'fore, since it is the manner of the sacred historians in other instances, John may be supposed 'to have mentioned Mary Magdalene singly in this part of his history, notwithstanding he knew 'that others had been with her at the sepulchre, and the rather, because his intention was to 'relate only what things happened in consequence of her information, and not to speak of the 'transactions of the rest, which his brethren historians had handled at large.'

You say very well. We therefore proceed in considering St. John's narrative, which follows, ver. 2. "Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him."

I do not believe that Mary Magdalene was now alone. All the women might be with her. If some only, the rest stayed in the garden, expecting her return. For they knew that she went to tell Peter and John what she and the rest had seen, and to invite them to come to the sepulchre, and see how things were there.

It follows, ver. 3—10. "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together. And the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, saw the linen clothes lying. Yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie; and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home."

Here you say upon ver. 8. p. 636. "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre. And he saw and believed. 'Finding nothing in the sepulchre but the 'cloths, he believed the body was taken away, as Mary Magdalene had told him. This, as I 'take it, is all that John means, when he tells us, that Peter and he, after searching the 'sepulchre, "saw and believed." Mary Magdalene, it would appear, had told them not only 'that the body was taken away, but that the cloths were left behind, a circumstance which filled 'them with wonder. They saw them however with their own eyes, and believed her report—— 'For that they had not the least suspicion of Christ's resurrection, is evident from the apology, 'which John himself makes for the stupidity of the disciples in this matter. Ver. 9. "For as 'yet they knew not the scriptures, that he must rise from the dead"——Nor had she herself the 'least notion of it, even when Jesus appeared to her, as is plain from what she says, ver. 13 and '15.' You say very right, in my opinion. And Grotius has spoken to the like purpose in his annotations [a] upon these verses.

St. Luke says, ch. xxiv. 12. "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which had come to pass." This I take not to be another or a second visit of Peter, or different from that mentioned by St. John, but the same. And as this is the general opinion of interpreters, I need not say any thing to prove it.

[a] 'Et vidit, et credidit,' ver. 8.] Credidit certo abesse corpus, quod Mariæ referenti non crediderat, et de quo conspectis fasciis dubitaverat. Gr. ad Joh. xx. 8.

Ver. 9. 'Nondum enim sciebant scripturam.'] quasi dicat, Corpus illud vitæ redditum nondum credebat Joannes. Nam et ille et discipuli alii nondum satis perceperant id quod scriptura prædixerat de ejus resurrectione. Sæpe quidem audiverant Dominum id pollicentem. Sed rei magnitudo et ingenii tarditas obstabant, quo minus hoc in animum admitterent. Lucæ xxiv. 12. Gr. ad Jo. xx. 9.

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St. John goes on ver. 11—18. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping. And as she wept she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them: Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing. And knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her: Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him: Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her: Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him: Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came, and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her."

This I suppose to be what is related by St. Mark xvi. 9. "Now when Jesus was risen, early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven dæmons." And I can suppose that Mary Magdalene was now alone, or only one of the other women with her, and she, perhaps, not one of the most honourable: which, I think, is the opinion of some learned interpreter, though I do not now recollect his [a] name.

Our Lord having shown himself to Mary Magdalene, and discoursed with her, as related by St. John, I think, he withdrew to a small distance, out of sight. Mary, then, immediately went to the other women, who were not far off, and told them that she had "seen the Lord," and that he had spoken unto her. They assented to what she said, and were willing to go down with her presently to the apostles, and acquaint them with the glad tidings, that the Lord was risen. Whilst they were going, and not yet got out of the garden, Jesus came to them, and showed himself to them all. Which is what is related by St. Matthew xxviii. 5—9. "And the angel answered and said unto the women: Fear ye not. For I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here. For he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead. And behold, he goes before you into Galilee. There shall ye see him. Lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear, and joy, and did run, [that is, they were setting out] to bring his disciples word. And as they went, [or were going] to tell his disciples, behold Jesus met them, saying, All hail, [or a good day to you.] And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped [b] him." And now, undoubtedly, Mary Magdalene likewise was admitted to embrace our Lord's feet, if she did it not before. For the words, "touch me not," need not to be understood of an absolute prohibition not to touch him at all, but only that she was not to expect to be indulged in a long conversation. And now they were all fully satisfied that it was Jesus himself, who was alive again. He had given them all the evidences which they could desire. They saw him, they heard his voice, they handled him. "Then [ver. 10.] said Jesus unto them: Be not afraid: go, tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee: and there shall they see me."

Now all the women together had a joint appearance of Jesus, resembling that made to the eleven disciples, in the evening of the same day. And perhaps there was some peculiar fitness in our Lord showing himself first to Mary Magdalene, either alone, or when one more only was with her, and then to the rest all together. So before he showed himself to the eleven, he appeared to the two going to Emmaus, and to Peter, much about the same time: though we cannot exactly say when or [c] where.

This appearance to Mary Magdalene, and the other women with her, may be considered as one and the same appearance. It is so considered by Lightfoot. Harmony of the N. T. Vol. I. p. 269, 270.

It follows, that we now consider their message to the apostles. John, as before, ver. 18,

[a] Grotius has in one place intimated, that Mary Magdalene had a maid servant with her——nisi dicere malumus, quod credibile est, ancillam Magdalenæ adfuisse. Gr. in Matt. xxviii. 9.

[b] 'Amplexæ sunt,' εκρατησαν.] Vulg. tenuerunt. Sic prehensis videlicet ejus pedibus, quasi eum illic retenturæ, quo spectat Christi responsum. Mihi propterea magis placuit amplectendi, quam prehendendi verbum. Bez. in loc.

[c] Postea etiam Jesus se conspiciendum præbuit Petro, quamvis rei circumstantiæ ad posteros transmissæ non sunt. Cleric. Harmon. p. 487.

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says: "Mary Magdalene came, and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had said these things unto her." Matt. xxviii. 9, 10, before transcribed. And Mark xvi. 10, 11. "And she went, and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not." St. Luke xxiv. 9—11. is more particular. "And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with him, who told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not."

Thus is the message, or testimony of the women, related by several evangelists; but the disciples did not believe them.

Nor do I discern in the gospels any more journies of the women, or of the apostles, to the sepulchre, and back again, than these already mentioned. The first journey of the women to the sepulchre was early in the morning: when they saw that the stone was rolled away from the sepulchre, and missed the body of Jesus. Mary Magdalene, then, with some other of the women, came down to the apostles, and informed them of what they had seen with great surprise. Whereupon Peter and John went to the sepulchre, and then returned to their own home. Mary Magdalene, and the others, who had come down to the apostles, followed Peter and John to the sepulchre. And when those two apostles returned back to Jerusalem, Mary and her companions stayed yet a while near the sepulchre. And whilst they were there attending, Jesus came, and showed himself to them. Whereupon Mary and all the women came down to Jerusalem, and went to the apostles, assuring them that they had seen Jesus: and went no more to the sepulchre. For which indeed there could be no reason, when they were persuaded that Jesus had left it, and was alive again. As Lightfoot says, in the place before referred to, p. 270. 'Here Matthew speaks short. For he mentioneth but one journey of the women to the grave, 'and back, and saith, that as they came back, Jesus met them. Whereas Mary Magdalene had 'two journeys. As she returned, now the watchmen are come into the city, and bribed to 'deny that he was risen. And so the chief priests and elders gave money to hire the nation 'into unbelief.'

The next appearance of our Lord is to the two disciples going to Emmaus. Of this I understand St. Mark to speak briefly, ch. xvi. 12, 13. "After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue. Neither believed they them. After that," meaning after the appearance of Jesus to the women before related, ver. 9, 10. and after that they had delivered their message and testimony to the eleven.

Of those two disciples St. Luke speaks more particularly and at large, ch. xxiv. 13—35. "And behold two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all those things which had happened. And it came to pass, that whilst they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were held, that they should not know him. And he said unto them: What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said unto him: Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them: What things? And they said unto him: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, who were early at the sepulchre. And when they found not his body, they came saying, that they had seen a vision of angels, which said he was risen. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even as they said. But him they saw not. Then he said unto them: O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went. And he made as if he would have gone farther. And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in, to tarry with

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them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, [or as he was sitting down to table with them:] he took bread, and blessed it, and brake unto them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him. And he vanished out of their sight: [that is, he retired, and went away.] And they said one to another: Did not our hearts burn within us, whilst he talked with us in the way? and whilst he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon. And they told them what things were done in the way, and how he was known unto them in breaking of bread."

Here ariseth a question, whether these two disciples did set out for Emmaus before the disciples knew of Mary Magdalene's having herself seen Jesus. You say, p. 648, 'It seems that 'these two had left the city before any of the women came with the news of Christ's personal 'appearance.' And presently afterwards you say, p. 648, 649, 'The smallest attention will 'show, that Cleophas and his companions do not here speak of Mary Magdalene's second infor-'mation.' Le Clerc likewise says, 'That[a] these two disciples set out for Emmaus before Jesus had shown himself to Mary Magdalene.' I believe this may be the opinion of many, I also may have said the same myself. But my honoured friend above-mentioned thinks otherwise, as we have seen. 'They did,' as he says, 'make their report to the apostles, before the two 'went from the rest of the company to Emmaus. No notice is mentioned by the two in 'discourse with Christ of the woman's having related their interview with Jesus, because it 'should seem, none of the company believed a word of what the women said,' Mark xvi. 11. Luke xxiv. 11. 'And none of the evangelists pretend to give an exact detail of all circumstances.'

Let us now go over the particulars of ver. 21—24. "And beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, who were early at the sepulchre. And when they found not his body, they came, saying, That they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive." It follows in the same discourse of the two disciples, ver. 24. "And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even as the women had said. But him they saw not." Referring to what St. John writes of Peter and John visiting the sepulchre, chap. xx. 3—10: and to what St. Luke writes of Peter, chap. xxiv. 12.

It might be expected that now, after this, these two disciples should also distinctly mention the second report of Mary Magdalene, related by St. John xx. 11—18, provided that report had been made to the apostles before the two set out for Emmaus. This omission is accounted for by my friend in the manner above mentioned: they take no notice of this, because they paid little regard to it. And does not this appear also in what the eleven say to these two when they came to them, and told them what they had seen? Luke xxiv. 34. "They said to them: The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." They say nothing of Mary Magdalene, though she certainly had been with them before that time, and had made her second report to them, "that she had seen the Lord, and that he had said these things unto her," John xx. 18.

Let me now cite some observations of your own, p. 652. 'As soon as Jesus departed, the 'two disciples made all the haste they could to Jerusalem, that they might have the pleasure of 'acquainting them with the agreeable news. But they were in some measure prevented: for 'immediately on their arrival, the eleven, with the women, accosted them, giving them the news 'of their Master's resurrection. "And they rose up at the same hour and returned to Jeru-'salem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying: The Lord 'is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." The apostles had given little credit to the 'reports of the women, supposing they were occasioned more by imagination than reality: but 'when a person of Simon's capacity and gravity declared that he had seen the Lord, they began 'to think that he was risen indeed. Their belief therefore was not a little confirmed by the arrival 'of these two disciples, who declared that the Lord had appeared to them also. Ver. 35. '"And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known unto them in 'breaking of bread," that is, by his prayer before meat. Mark however represents the reception 'which their report met with somewhat differently: ch. xvi. 12. "After that he appeared in 'another form," εν ετερᾳ μορφῃ. i. e. in another dress, the dress of a traveller, "unto two of

[a] Cum vero duo ex discipulis Jesu, mane ejusdem diei, antequam se Mariæ Magdalenæ stitisset Jesus, profecti essent Jerosolymâ Emmaüntem. Cleric. Harm. p. 487.

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'them, as they walked and went into the country. Ver. 13. And they went and told it unto 'the residue: neither believed they them.' But there is no inconsistency between the evan- 'gelists: for though the greatest part of the apostles believed that Jesus was risen, as Luke 'affirms; some who had not given credit either to the women or to Simon, continued obstinately 'to disbelieve, in spite of all that these two disciples or the rest could say.'

I shall add somewhat farther from your Preliminary Observations, p. 39, where you say, 'The male disciples being the witnesses, upon whose testimony the world was to believe that 'our Lord arose from the dead, it concerned mankind more to be informed of his appearances 'to them, than to be made acquainted with his appearances to the women. Luke knew this. 'And therefore, while he has related the appearances to the male disciples he has omitted the 'appearances to the women altogether. It seems, the brevity which he studied did not permit 'that both should be told. In like manner the apostle Paul, summing up the evidence of our 'Lord's resurrection, takes no notice of his appearances to the women, because they were not to 'be the witnesses of this matter to the world.' 1 Cor. xv. 1—9.

And here from your observations just mentioned, ariseth another consideration. For you say, that 'St. Luke has omitted Christ's appearances to the women altogether.' If that be so, we are not to expect, that these two should take any notice of Mary Magdalene's second report, though it had been made to the apostles, before they set out from Jerusalem. St. Luke's words are these: ch. xxiv. 1—11. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they [that is, the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee, ch. xxiii. 55.] came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices, which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them: Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember, how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying: The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words. And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, who told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." That is the account, which St. Luke has given of the testimony of the women to the resurrection of Jesus. And it is very observable. I make no question, that herein is included Mary Magdalene's second report to the apostles, mentioned by St. John xx. 18. And it confirms the supposition, before-mentioned, that Mary Magdalene was not then alone, but that all the other women were then with her, though they are not mentioned by St. John.

These observations are sufficient to account for the two disciples not mentioning distinctly the report of Mary Magdalene, though they did not set out from Jerusalem until after it had been made to the apostles.

But there are other considerations, which may support the same persuasion. It is confirmed by the order of narration in St. Mark's gospel, ch. xvi. 9. "Now when Jesus was risen early, the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven dæmons." Ver. 10. "And she went, and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept." This is what St. John says, ch. xx. 18. "Mary Magdalene came, and told the disciples, that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her." It follows in Mark xvi. 11. "And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not." Then, at ver. 12. "After[a] that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country." This is full proof, that these two did not set out for Emmaus, till after that Mary Magdalene had told the disciples, "she had seen the Lord."

And, I pray, what is the meaning of his appearing to them in another form? You say, in another dress, that of a traveller. Which I think does not give the true meaning of the phrase. Grotius[b] says, 'in another dress, that is, different from what had been used by him.' And Dr.

[a] Μετα δε ταυτα δυσιν εξ αυτων περιπατουσιν εφανερωθη εν ετερᾳ μορφῃ, πορευομενοις εις αγρον.

[b] Ἐν ἑτερᾳ μορφῃ, in aliâ effigie.] Habitu alio, quam quo uti solebat. Ideo παροικον habitantem in proximo, putabant. Grot. in Marc. xvi. 12.

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Doddridge, to the same purpose: 'in a different habit from what he ordinarily wore.' But neither does that, as I apprehend, fully represent the design and meaning of the Evangelist's expression. I think, he refers to some appearance of Christ, which had been made before that now made to these two. What can that be, but "the appearance to Mary Magdalene," mentioned by himself, ver. 9, 10? This seems to me to be the plain and evident meaning of St. Mark. And it fully shows, that Mary's second report to the apostles had been made, before these two set out from Jerusalem to go to Emmaus.

There is still another argument of great force, which offers to our consideration. These two disciples did not set out till eleven or twelve o'clock according to our computation. Emmaus was little more than two hours walk, if at all. They arrived at the village about three in the afternoon, or sooner, Luke xxiv. 29. As they were engaged in discourse, during a great part of the journey; we will suppose, that they made three hours of it. Consequently, they set out at twelve, or not much sooner. But before that, Mary had made her second report to the disciples, that "she had seen the Lord." And these two were with the disciples when that report was made. Mary and the other women went early to the sepulchre. They got to the sepulchre by the rising of the sun. When Mary came first to the apostles, as is related John xx. 1, 2, it could not be more than six o'clock, or thereabout. After which Peter and John went in great haste to the sepulchre, and Mary with them, or after them, as fast as she could. Peter and John did not stay long at the sepulchre. But having taken a view of the state of things there, "they went away again to their own home," John xx. 10. Soon after these two apostles were gone away, the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene, and presently after that, to all the other women, who had gone up early in the morning with the spices. Then Mary and the rest came down to the apostles, and let them know that they "had seen the Lord," and they delivered to them the message, with which they had been entrusted, together with all the circumstances of his appearing to them. It could not be then more than seven or eight or nine in the forenoon. This is much confirmed by the circumstance observed by my friend from Matt. xxviii. 11. "Now when they [the women] were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done." It may be well supposed, that this part of the watch, or guard, came to the priests as soon as they could have access unto them in a body, when met together. Which may be reckoned between seven and eight, or at the farthest, between eight and nine in the morning. *At* that time Mary Magdalene, and the women with her, came down to the disciples, and made their report to them, that "they had seen the Lord."

There can then no longer be any question made, but that the two disciples were acquainted with that report of Mary Magdalene, and the rest of the women, before they set out for Emmaus.

St. Luke says, ch. xxiv. 33—36. "And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them. Saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them: Peace be unto you."

We should now observe the time, when these two disciples arrived at Jerusalem, and returned to the company of the disciples, whom they had left to go to Emmaus.

When they arrived at that village, and entreated Jesus "to abide with them, they said: It is toward evening, and the day is far spent," or has already begun to decline: οτι προς εσπεραν εστι, και κεκλικεν ημερα, ver. 29. It was past noon, and might be near our three after noon. As they were sitting down to eat, looking more directly at Jesus, than they had yet done, they knew him. Our Lord thereupon retired, and they hastened to Jerusalem. Emmaus was about a two hours walk from Jerusalem. They might get thither about five after noon, more than an hour before sun-set. And, probably, did so. Soon after our Lord came in. He might have been there before them. But he was willing, that the disciples, and they that were with them, should be prepared for his appearing among them, by the testimony of these two, added to the testimonies of Peter, and the women, who had already seen him.

We proceed in Luke xxiv. 36. "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst, and saith: Peace be unto you." Ver. 37. "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed, that they had seen a spirit. [Which shows, that there were still several, who did not believe

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him to be risen from the dead.] Ver. 38. "And he said unto them: Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" Ver. 39. "Behold my hands, and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me, and see. For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Ver. 40. "And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet." Ver. 41. "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered; he said unto them: Have ye here any meat?" Ver. 42. "And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb." Ver. 43. "And he took it, and did eat before them."

The words, last quoted, "Have ye here any meat, &c." deserve notice. They should be compared with Mark xvi. 14. "Afterwards he appeared to the eleven, as they sat at meat. Υστερον, ανακειμενοις αυτοις τοις ενδεκα εφανερωθη. The eleven were yet at table, or were not yet risen up from their places. There is no improbability in this, considering the transactions of the day, and the great concern they had been in for their Lord, and their apprehensions from the Jews. It might well happen, that they had not dined before five after noon. Coming in, then, at that time, when their repast was just over, and finished, or almost finished, he might well put that question: "Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb."

Upon this you say, p. 654. 'He tarried so long with them, that they had time to make 'ready some fish for supper, which he took a share of.' But the other way of accounting for that question, appears to me preferable. "Have ye here any meat?" Εχετι τι βρωσιμον ενθαδε is properly said to persons now risen, or just rising from table. And they gave it him presently. He does not desire them to prepare, or make ready for him. But he asks, if they had any meat at hand, or any thing left. Beza disputes this interpretation of the word.[a] But he acknowledgeth that it is the rendering both of the Vulgate, and of Erasmus. To me it appears very right. And Beza's objections against it are frivolous and ill grounded.

We proceed. Luke xxiv. 44. "And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me." Ver. 45. "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Ver. 46. "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Ver. 47. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Ver. 48. "And ye are witnesses of these things." Ver. 49. "And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, till ye be endowed with power from on high."

Of this appearance of our Lord to the disciples, St. John writes to this purpose, ch. xx. 19—23. "Then the same day, at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed upon them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Thus concluded the first day of the week, the day on which Jesus rose from the dead. Says St. John, "Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week—came Jesus, and stood in the midst." The first evening, according to Jewish computation, began at three after noon, and ended at six after noon, or sun-setting. Of this use of the word, we have divers examples in the New Testament. In the history of the miracle of the five thousand fed with five loaves, St. Matthew says, ch. xiv. 15. "And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past." It was then about three after noon. So likewise Matt. xxvii. 57. "When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was a disciple." Every one knows that Jesus expired at three after noon. At that time, called here the evening, came Joseph to take care of the body of Jesus. And when St. John in this text says, "the same day at evening, being the first day of

[a] 'Postremo vero unâ sedentibus ipsis undecim.' [recumbentibus ipsis undecim. Vulg.] id est, cum unâ domi essent. Vulg. et Erasmus de accubitu interpretantur, &c. Bez. ad Marc. xvi. 14.

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the week, came Jesus:" he must be understood to say that Jesus came to the disciples, in that space of time, between three after noon and sun-setting, or six after noon. And from the history of the two disciples who had been at Emmaus [as related Luke xxiv.] who had arrived just before Jesus came in, we have argued, that Jesus came in at five after noon, or possibly somewhat sooner, when there was yet an hour's day-light. And I believe, that upon due consideration, it will be thought to be a strange conceit, which has been admitted by some christian commentators, that Jesus did not now appear to the disciples till after sun-setting, when it was night, and even late in the night: which is, really, to expose this history to the scoffs of infidels. St. John says, "the doors were shut," but he does not say that they were shut because it was dark: but "for fear of the Jews:" which they may have been all that day.[a]

I have still one observation more to mention; which is intended farther to confirm the supposition, that the two did not leave the other disciples, nor set out for Emmaus, till after the report made by Mary Magdalene, and the other women with her, "that they had seen the Lord:" and also to explain more distinctly those words of the two disciples to Jesus. Luke xxiv. 22, 23. "Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre. And when they found not his body, they came, saying, That they had also seen a vision of angels, which said, that he was alive."

I think that these words refer to, and include the second report of Mary Magdalene, and the women with her, which is recorded in John xx. 18. "Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her."

What I would now propose to consideration, is this: neither Mary Magdalene, nor any other of the women, saw any angel when they first went up to the sepulchre. They did not see any angel till some time afterwards, that is, not till after they had been down with the apostles, and returned back to the sepulchre. Nor did John and Peter see any angel when they went up to verify the truth of what the women had said to them. The appearance of the angels was not till after Mary Magdalene was returned to the sepulchre from the apostles: therefore the two disciples, in the words above quoted from Luke xxiv. 22, 23. refer to the second report or testimony of Mary Magdalene, and the women with her.

Let us observe the history, as it lies in St. John's gospel, xx. 1, 2. "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them: They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." She says not a word of the appearance of angels, or any information received from them. Therefore no such thing had happened.

It follows, ver. 3—10. "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying. Yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed, [that is, finding nothing in the sepulchre but the clothes, he believed that the body was taken away as Mary Magdalene had said:] For as yet they knew not the scripture: That he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own home." Therefore neither did these apostles see any angels at the sepulchre, or near it. For no such thing is here mentioned or hinted. It is also confirmed by St. Luke's account of the same visit, or journey to the sepulchre, ch. xxiv. 12. "Then arose Peter, and came unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." He seeth not any angels. Nor does he receive any information from angels. He only sees, and views the sepulchre, and observes, that the body was gone, and the clothes were left lying by themselves. Nor could he forbear to wonder greatly.

We are next to attend to what follows the quotation before made from John xx. where at

[a] What is above said, is very similar to some observations of the author of the Remarks upon Dr. Ward's Dissertations, p. 285, &c. to whom therefore I refer you: for there the same point is handled more at large.

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ver. 11, 12. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."

When the two disciples, John and Peter, returned to their home in Jerusalem, Mary still stayed behind. "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping." And well she might, considering how ignominiously her Lord had been put to death a few days ago: and now the body was missing and gone: and, as she thought, removed and carried away, but whither, and by whom, she could not tell. In this distress, and now first upon this occasion, there is an appearance of angels.

"But Mary stood without weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre: and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain." No such beings had been seen before by any of the women, or the disciples, who had looked into the sepulchre, and been in it, and scarched it, once and again. "And they say unto her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord. And I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her: Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her: Mary. She turneth herself, and saith: Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her: Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say unto them: I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came, and told the disciples, that she had seen the Lord, and that he had said these things unto her."

Since therefore there was no appearance of angels to the women, when they first came to the sepulchre, those words, Luke xxiv. 23, "And certain women, when they found not his body, came, saying that they also had seen a vision of angels, which said, that he was alive." These words, I say, must relate to the second report of Mary Magdalene, and the other women, recorded by St. John, in the verse just cited, ch. xx. 18.

I am not aware, that any considerable difficulties can be raised against this account. I think, we may safely follow the order of things related by St. John, who had seen and read the other gospels.

St. Luke xxiv. 1—11. puts together the whole testimony of the women. But we know from St. John, that their testimony consisted of two reports; brought down to the apostles at different times, and at a considerable distance of time from each other, one made, before John and Peter went to the sepulchre, the second report afterwards, as we have seen.

When St. Luke says xxiv. 12. "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre," he does not intend to say, that happened not till after all was done, which is related in the former eleven verses. Our version, indeed, is, "then arose Peter," seeming to intimate, that he did not go to the sepulchre till after the message delivered by the women to the apostles, by the direction of the angels. But there is nothing of that kind in the original. The words are: Ὁ δε Πετρος ανασας εδραμεν επι το σημειον: that is, "And Peter arising, went to the sepulchre." Or, moreover, beside the report and testimony of the women, "Peter also arose, and ran unto the sepulchre," &c.'

I shall now make a paraphrase of those words of the two disciples to Jesus in the way to Emmaus. Luke xxiv. 22, 23, 24. "Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre. And when they found not his body they came, saying, That they had also seen a vision of angels." [And they said they also had seen the Lord themselves.][a] But in a matter of so great importance, and so very unlikely, we all thought it best to pay little regard to their testimony. "And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said. But him they saw not."

[a] I think, I have rightly inserted that in my paraphrase of that place. Dr. Doddridge seems to have been aware, that so much was implied. Therefore, in his notes upon ver. 23, he says: 'and what is added in the next verse, with relation 'to Peter and John, who are the men there spoken of, ("but 'him they did not see") may perhaps imply, that the women pretended also to have seen Jesus himself.' And in his paraphrase of ver. 24, he says: 'but him they did 'not see: though the women apprehended, he had actually 'appeared to them himself, and declared, that he was risen, 'and would show himself to his disciples.'

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'However it must be acknowledged, that beside the women, two of the disciples, and those of 'the best understanding, and the most eminent among us, have also been at the sepulchre. The 'occasion of it was this. Some of the women, who were very early at the sepulchre, came 'down to us in great haste, saying, "They have taken the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we 'know not where they have laid him," John xx. 2. Whereupon two, and those the most emi-'nent of the disciples, went themselves to the sepulchre, and found it even as the women had 'said, that is, that the body was gone, and nothing left beside the clothes, in which it had been 'covered. But him they saw not: [as the women have since said, that they have seen him.']

'Whereupon, our Lord, as if out of patience at their stupidity and inconsideration, "says 'to them: O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken," &c. 'ver. 25.

These two do not mention the visit made to the sepulchre by Peter and John, last, because it was not made till after the women had seen "a vision of angels," but, as the more considerable thing. The women's testimony they slighted. "Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not," Luke xxiv. 11. For these two disciples they had some regard, but not so much as they should. And therefore our Lord says to them: "O fools, and slow of heart," and what there follows.

From all which it appears to me evident, that the two disciples did not set out for Emmaus, till after the report made to the apostles by Mary Magdalene, "that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her:" as related John xx. 18.

This observation I have deferred till now, that I might not disturb and interrupt the preceding argument.

I have now performed all that I intended. For I never proposed to go any farther, than the appearances of our Lord to the disciples, and others, on the day of his resurrection.

Shall I now recollect, and sum up what has been said under this fifth and last article of our inquiry?

Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, and other women, who had come up with our Lord to Jerusalem from Galilee, and had often attended upon him, went up to the sepulchre, bringing the spices, which they had prepared. As they were going, they said among themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? For it was very great." But, when they came nigh to the sepulchre, they perceived that the stone was rolled away. That obstacle therefore to their performing the intended office of respect, in embalming the body, of which they had been apprehensive, was removed. Which afforded them, for the present, a good deal of satisfaction. But when they had entered in, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. This filled them with the utmost surprise and concern. Whereupon, with the consent and approbation of all the rest of the women, Mary Magdalene, and some others of them, ran down immediately, in all haste, to the apostles at Jerusalem, telling them, that they had been at the sepulchre, that they found the stone rolled away from the door of it: that they therefore entered in, but found not the body of Jesus: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, [said they,] and we know not where they have laid him." Peter and John therefore ran to the sepulchre, entered into it, and found every thing exactly agreeing to the report of the women. The body of Jesus was gone, but the cloths, with which he had been covered, remained, every part of them, and lying in great order. So that they could not but wonder greatly at what had happened. But, as it was not safe or prudent for them to stay there, they soon went away again to their own home. But Mary Magdalene, and the other women, who had come back to the sepulchre from the apostles, stayed behind. And soon after those disciples were gone away, there appeared to them two angels, and one of them said to them, "Fear not. Ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here. He is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy, and did run to bring the disciples word. As they were going to tell his disciples, behold Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them: Be not afraid. Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee. And there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done." So in Matt. xxviii. 5—11. or, as in John xx. 18. "Mary Magdalene came,

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and told the disciples, that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unt her." When she, and the rest of the women, now came down to the apostles, it might be about seven or eight, at the latest about eight or nine in the forenoon. Nor did the women, nor any of the disciples, go up to the sepulchre any more after this. These just mentioned, are all the journies to the sepulchre which are recorded by the evangelists. Some while after the return of these women, and after they had reported their testimony to the apostles, two of their company went to the village, called Emmaus; where Jesus appeared to them also, and was known to them, about three of the clock in the afternoon, or sooner. And about the same time the Lord appeared also to Peter, though we cannot exactly say the place. Jesus having clearly made known himself to the two at Emmaus, as they were sitting down to table, he afterwards withdrew, when it was about three after noon. "They then rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them. They arrived there about five after noon, or sooner. Immediately after which "Jesus [also] came, and stood in the midst," and graciously manifested himself to them, giving them full assurance that it was he himself.

According to different computations, Jesus showed himself to his disciples and followers four or five times on the day on which he rose from the dead. First to Mary Magdalene, and the women with her at the sepulchre: next to the two, who went to Emmaus, then to Peter, and at length to the eleven at Jerusalem, who were assembled together, about five of the clock in the afternoon. If we compute the appearance to Mary Magdalene, to be distinct from that to the women, there are five appearances, otherwise, they are four only.

Thus I have digested the history of our Saviour's resurrection, and his first appearances to the disciples. I please myself with the persuasion, that I have done it in a plainer manner, than it has been done of late by some others. These thoughts therefore are now referred to your consideration. And I remain, with true esteem,

SIR,

Your friend and well-wisher,

E. F.

END OF THE OBSERVATIONS UPON DR. MACKNIGHT'S HARMONY.

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INDEXES

TO

THIS AND THE PRECEDING VOLUMES.

N.B. The Numeral Letters denote the Volumes, and the Figures the Pages.

INDEX I.

GREEK WORDS EXPLAINED.

Αλλοτριοεπισκοπος, ... Vol. I. p. 109
Απογραφη. ..... I. 163, 164
Απογραφομαι..... I. 144
Βασιλευς. ..... I. 48, note b.
Δαιμονιον. ... . IV. 638, note *
Δεισιδαιμονια..... I. 105
Ελληνιζειν. ..... V. 493
Ενταφιαζειν. ..... V. 487
Ευλαβης. ..... Vol. V. p. 503
Ιουδαιζειν. ..... III. 403, IV. 232
Οικουμενη. ..... I. 132, 140
Παρακλητος. ..... V. 404, 405
Πρωτος. ..... I. 165—171
Σεβομενοι. ..... V. 500—503
Χαριζομαι. ..... I. 40

INDEX II.

VARIOUS READINGS OF TEXTS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Matt. i. 18. .... Vol. I. p. 373
vi. 13. ..... I. 566
II. 410, 476, 596, 625
III. 8, 9, 31, 78
33. ..... I. 564
II. 392
viii. 28. / Mark v. 1. / Luke viii. 26. ... I. 564. *And see Wetstein upon Matt.* viii. 28
Matt. x. 29. ..... I. 565
xiii. 35. ..... II. 392
IV. 227
xix. 19. ..... I. 563
24. ..... I. 565
xxiv. 36. .... II. 85
xxv. 23. ..... I. 565
xxviii. 9. ..... I. 558
Mark ii. 9. ..... II. 442
vi. 3. ..... I. 565
xvi. 9—20. .. I. 510
II. 476, 496, 567, 594, 627
III. 22, 72, 90
Luke ii. 2. .... Vol. II. 392
33. ..... II. 567
ix. 50. ..... II. 492
xi. 2, 3, 4. ... I. 565
xxii. 43, 44 .. I. 510, 512
II. 568
III. 83
xxiii. 43. ..... I. 566
II. 233
John i. 28 ..... I. 564
v. 4. ..... I. 510, 512
6. ?..... II. 448
vii. 39. ..... I. 566
viii. 1—11... I. 510, 512
II. 233, 448, 496, 568, 594, 611
III. 5, 89, 90
25. ..... II. 475
44. ..... II. 190, 233
xiii. 14, 15... II. 13
xix 14. ..... III. 5
Acts viii. 39. .... .. II. 568
III. 62

Digitized by Google

Acts xiv. 19...Vol. III. 62
xv. 20, 29.... II. 13—20, 524, 525
xx. 28..... II. 402
III. 32, 57
Rom. i. 3..... II. 233
32..... I. 296
II. 20
III. 8, 32
ix. 4, 5..... I. 368, 423
II. 60
xii. 13..... II. 492
III. 32
1 Cor. vi. 20..... II. 27
ix. 6..... I. 427
16..... I. 566
24..... II. 630
xi. 23, 24.... II. 21
Eph. i. 1..... II. 466—468
iv. 30..... II. 21, 625
v. 9..... I. 608
1 Thess. v. 21... Vol. I. 566—569
III. 67
1 Tim. iii. 16..... I. 569
II. 522, 632
2 Tim. ii. 2..... I. 503
Tit. ii. 13..... III. 56
Heb. xi. 37..... III. 33, 34
1 Pet. ii. 23..... II. 24, 630
III. 35
1 John iii. 16..... III. 23
iv. 3..... III. 93
v. 7, 8..... I. 430, 569
II. 26, 38
II. 471, 496, 568
III. 23, 29, 30, 35, 56, 62, 81
Jude 1..... I. 541
4, 7..... II. 450
Rev. i. 5..... III. 57
xxii. 14..... II. 402

INDEX III.

TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE EXPLAINED.

Gen. i. 2.... Vol. III. 13
26, 27..... V. 423, 424, 447
28—30.... V. 448
ii. throughout, V. 448—454
iii. 1—5..... V. 450
6—19.... V. 450---452
14..... V. 451
20, 21.... V. 452, 453
22..... V. 424
vi. 1—4..... II. 621
2. ..... II. 485
xlix. 10..... V. 40
Exod. ii. 11, 12.... II. 485
xxiii. 20, 21. V. 386
xxxiii. 15... V. 386
Deut. xviii. 15—20. II. 485
V. 40
Judg. xiv. 14..... IV. 145
2 Kings ii. 9..... V. 398
1 Chron. xii. 18..... V. 398
Psalm xl. 7..... V. 376
xlv. 7..... V. 383
li. 8..... II. 72
lxix. 31..... II. 365
Prov. i. 23..... V. 398
iv. 20—27... V. 303
viii. 22, 23.. V. 90
Eccles. iv. 13..... II. 90, note i.
xii. 1..... V. 425
Isa. xxviii. 10... IV. 245
lxiii. 1—6. . II. 365
V. 465, 466
Ezek. i. 1..... II. 285
Mic. vi. 1—7..... V. 40, 41
Hag. ii. 9..... V. 42
Zech. iii. 1—4..... II. 286
vi. 12, 13... II. 286
xii. 10—14.. II. 286
xiii. 1 / xiv. 9 ... II. 286
Mal. iii. 1. ..... V. 426

Matt. i. 1.... Vol. II. 611
iv. 1..... V. 145
23..... I. 570
v. 3..... I. 469
II. 233, 366
4..... II. 233
6..... I. 469
44..... III. 88
vi. 1—4..... III. 67
13..... II. 596
viii. 24—26.. I. 270
28 ; Mark v. 2 .. I. 236, &c.
Matt. ix. 1..... II. 612
xii. 27..... I. 268
28..... V. 397, note.
31..... V. 406
43—45.. I. 269
47, 48... II. 202
xiii. 3—8 / Luke viii. 5, 8 .. I. 469
Matt. xiii. 35..... I. 220
xvi. 17—19.. III. 390
28..... I. 510
xvii. 21 / Mark ix. 29 .. I. 270
Matt. xx. 1—16... III. 72
xxii. 11, 12.. I. 571
xxiv. 15, 16. III. 496
xxvi. 39..... V. 173
xxvii. 32 / Mark xv. 21 / Luke xxiii. 26 . I. 511
Matt. xxvii. 46.... V. 171, 172
62—66. V. 522—524
xxviii. 1.... V. 526, 527
17... II. 407
19... IV. 341
20... II. 611
Mark i. 1..... III. 84
23—26.... I. 271

Digitized by Google

Mark v. 1—19. Vol. V. 476—480
39..... II. 627
x. 39, 40.... II. 627
III. 88
xiii. 32..... V. 387
xiv. 51, 52... III. 186
xv. 25..... V. 482—484
40..... II. 476
xvi. 1..... V. 528—531
9..... I. 241
9—20... III. 186, 187
12..... V. 537, 538
Luke i. 1—4..... III. 156, 157, 197, 198, 203,—206
2..... III. 13
3..... III. 86, 87
ii. 1..... I. 139—142
2..... I. 159—175
V. 278
25..... V. 503
34, 35.... IV. 35
iii. 23..... I. 323
II. 420
iv. 18..... II. 366
viii. 2..... I. 260
x. 17, 18.... I. 271
xi. 13..... V. 405
xv. 11—32... II. 465
xvi. 25..... II. 611
xxii. 43, 44.. I. 511
44..... V. 375, note a.
xxiii. 43..... V. 171
xxiv. 12..... V. 541
18..... II. 420
III. 87
31..... V. 484
44..... II. 544, 545
49..... V. 405
John i. 1—5..... I. 618, 619
IV. 335, 336
1—12..... III. 240—242
V. 379, 380
9..... II. 611
14..... V. 375, 380
15..... V. 376
15, 30.... I. 167
ii. 14, 15, 18, 19, 20... } I. 130
20..... I. 205
iii. 5..... I. 469
13..... V. 389
v. 1..... II. 420
III. 88
18..... V. 389
39..... III. 20
vi. 44..... V. 134
54, 55.... I. 511, 571
vii. 5..... III. 382
6, 7, 8... III. 382
39..... V. 474
viii. 1—11... I. 25
56, 58... V. 377
ix. 3..... I. 265
xi. 47, 48.... I. 31
49—52... I. 211, 212
xii. 7..... V. 487
20, 21... V. 480—482
xiii. 3..... V. 378
14, 15... I. 571
xiv. 1—7..... V. 131, 132
16, 17, 26 V. 403, 404, 474
xv, 18..... I. 167
John xvi. 7—17, Vol. V. 386, 403, 406, 407
13..... V. 473
14..... V. 474
xvii. 5..... V. 316, 377
xviii. 15..... III. 216
xix. 1—8, 9, 12 I. 83
13, 14.. V. 482—484
25..... III. 87
39..... V. 485
40..... V. 530
xx. 19..... V. 483, 539, 540
28..... II. 530, 531
Acts i. 2..... V. 408
ii. 8..... II. 471
15..... I. 112
32..... V. 390
iv. 4..... III. 37, 393
13..... III. 213
24—31.... I. 271
v. 3, 4..... V. 408
32..... V. 408
vi. 1..... V. 487
9..... I. 271, 272
vii. 54..... V. 389
viii. 18, 19... V. 408
ix. 19—25... III. 263, 264
26—30... III. 168, 169, 264, 369
31..... I. 54—56
V. 408
x. 28..... III. 397, note e.
xi. 19, 20.... III. 266
28..... I. 132—134
xii. 17..... III. 402
xiii. 1—4.... V. 409
xv. 20, 28, 29. I. 571
II. 13—20, 410, 524, 525
V. 409, 410, 494—519
xvi. 13..... I. 61, 62
16—18.. I. 261, 262, 265
II. 611
16—39.. I. 99
xvii. 18..... II. 611
22, 23... I. 105, 106, and 105 note d.
II. 611
IV. 171—174
34..... II. 371
xviii. 8, 17... II. 611
15..... I. 104
xix. 1—7..... I. 176
V. 410, 474
xx. 22, 23, 28 V. 409
xxi. 17—30... V. 515, 516
24..... I. 115, 116
xxiii. 3..... III. 67
xxiv. 14..... I. 104
IV. 505
xxvii. 2..... III. 307
xxviii. 19.... III. 312
Romans i. 3, 4..... V. 389, 390
ii. 16, xvi. 25. I. 572
v. 12..... V. 457
vii..... II. 631
viii. 33, 34... II. 596
ix. 3..... III. 83
5..... I. 368, 423
25, 26.... V. 47, 48
xiv. 17..... V. 410, 411
xv. 24..... III. 32
xvi. 5..... II. 612
21..... III. 32
1 Cor. v. 9..... II. 631

Digitized by Google

1 Cor. v. 9.... Vol. III. 33, 468
9, 10, 11... III. 467, 468
vi. 11..... V. 414
vii. 12, 25, 40. V. 519
ix. 5, 6..... III. 146
20—22.... V. 517, 518
27..... II. 611, 630
xii. 3..... V. 412
7, 13.... V. 411
xv. 7..... I. 572
III. 369
24—28... V. 88
25..... III. 33
29..... II. 611
32..... V. 466, 467
50..... II. 198
xvi. 2..... III. 33
2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.... V. 412
iv. 4..... IV. 620
V. 391
v. 14..... V. 465
viii. 18 ..... II. 495, 548, 550, 552, 612
III. 151, 152
xi. 4..... V. 414
6..... I. 532
II. 571
xii. 2—4..... II. 108
7..... II. 571
Gal. i. 19 ..... II. 631
ii. 1, 2..... III. 400
4..... V. 520
7—9..... III. 172
11—16.... V. 514
14..... III. 403
iv. 4..... V. 426
9..... V. 264
12..... II. 571
vi. 11..... III. 290, 291
V. 521
Eph. i. 13..... V. 414
15..... III. 351
15, 16..... III. 11
ii. 3..... II. 471, 479
V. 99
13. 19..... III. 396
18..... V. 414
20..... II. 613
22..... V. 413
iii. 9..... V. 390
iv. 30..... V. 414, 415
v. 18, 19..... V. 416
vi. 2, 11, 12.. I. 248
Phil. ii. 6..... IV. 90
V. 199, 376, 392
6, 8..... I. 368, 572
II. 21, 62, 108, 127
V. 327, 328
9, 10, 11... V. 328, 329
14..... II. 631
iii. 5..... V. 489
Col. i. 15..... V. 391, 392
15, 19..... II. 631, 632
Col. ii. 9..... Vol. V. 203, 389, 427.
iv. 14..... II. 550, 605
III. 87
16..... II. 521, 607
III. 11, 84, 87, 357, 361
1 Thess. i. 5, 6..... V. 417
iv. 16, 17..... II. 109
v. 19—22..... V. 416, 417
21, 22..... I. 611
2 Thess. ii. 1—12..... II. 94. 612
4..... II. 612
iii. 17..... III. 467
1 Tim. i. 18. } ..... V. 409
iv. 14. }
iii. 16..... I. 573
vi. 20..... III. 152
2 Tim. i. 15..... III. 314, 315
16..... II. 612
ii. 8..... II. 371: and see on Rom. ii. 16
iv. 6..... III. 313, 314
10..... II. 371
16, 17..... III. 313, 314
16—18.... II. 556
18..... III. 314
Tit. iii. 3..... I. 572
10, 11.... II. 22, 23
13..... II. 522
Philem. 2..... II. 612
Heb. i. 1—12..... V. 392—394
6..... V. 382
8, 9..... V. 383
10—12.... V. 393, 394
ii. 4..... V. 400
11..... V. 330, note
vi. 4..... V. 400, 401
ix. 14..... V. 417, note
x. 5..... V. 375, 376
28, 29..... V. 418
xi. 35—37.... V. 469—472
xii. 16..... V. 508
xiii. 23..... III. 318, 335, 341
1 Pet. i. 1, 2..... III. 418
12..... V. 401
ii. 5..... V. 224
13, 14..... I. 48
iii. 3..... V. 21
iv. 15..... I. 109
v. 13..... II. 522, 626
III. 43, 53, 55, 424, 425
2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.... III. 469
1 John v. 5—10..... V. 418, 419
3 John 5, 6, 7..... III. 434, 435
9..... III. 434, 435, 469
Jude 6..... III. 445
8, 9..... III. 444
Rev. i. 2..... I. 642
ii. 24, 25..... V. 504
vi. 12, 13.... III. 43
vii. 1, 3..... III. 43, 44
xx. 1—3, 7... III. 44
xxii. 17..... V. 419

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TEXTS OF SERMONS IN THE FIFTH VOLUME.

	PAGE
1 Kings xviii. 12	106
Psalm lxxxiv. 11	111
cxix. 59	63
60	68
Proverbs iv. 23	302
viii. 17	89
xxviii. 14	152
Micah vi. 8. (Three Sermons)	75
Matthew x. 16	3
xi. 12	236
xii. 36, 37	142
xix. 13, 14, 15	95
xxvi. 13	229
xxvii. 52, 53	175
xxviii. 12, 13	180
Luke xvii. 22	192
John xiv. 2	51
xiv. 27	207
xv. 5	131
xvi. 24	218
xix. 28, 29	157
John xix. 30	161
xx. 17	197
xx. 29	187
Acts xvi. 31. (Two Sermons)	118
Rom. xi. 11. (Three Sermons)	34
xii. 2. (Two Sermons)	14
2 Cor. viii. 9	202
xiii. 14	212
Gal. iii. 13, 14	260
Eph. v. 16	253
Phil. ii. 5—11. (Four Sermons)	309
iv. 5	297
iv. 8	137
2 Thess. i. 10	25
1 Tim. iii. 16	248
iv. 8. (Two Sermons)	267
vi. 12	126
2 Tim. i. 5	102
James iii. 2	147
2 Pet. i. 15, 16. (Two Sermons)	277
Rev. iii. 18	242

INDEX IV.

AN

ALPHABETICAL CATALOGUE

OF

AUTHORS, SECTS, AND WRITINGS,

WHOSE HISTORY IS WRITTEN, AND FROM WHICH EXTRACTS ARE MADE, IN THIS AND THE PRECEDING VOLUMES.

A

	A.D.	VOL.	PAGE
Abgarus, king of Edessa	33	iii.	594
Acacius, Bp of Cæsarea, in Palestine	340	ii.	311
Acts of Paul and Thecla in the second century		i.	448
Acts of Pilate	33	iii.	599
Adamantius, author of a Dialogue against the Marcionites	330	ii.	406
Adamites or Adamians, an imaginary sect		iv.	575
Addas, or Adamantus, a Manichee; near the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century		ii.	150
Adrian, emperor	117	iv.	51
Aërius	360	ii.	413
Aëtius, an Arian	359	ii.	311
Julius Africanus	220	i.	513
Agapius, a Manichæan writer of the fourth century		ii.	151
Agathias, writer of the history of Justinian	565	iv.	428
Agrippa Castor	132	i.	437
Alexander, Bp of Alexandria	313	ii.	301
Alexander, Bp of Jerusalem	212	i.	491
Alexander of Lycopolis, in the fourth century		ii. iv.	144 307
The Alexandrian Manuscript	about 500	iii.	44

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	A.D.	VOL.	PAGE
Alogians, an imaginary sect		iv.	690
Ambrose, Origen's friend	230	i.	521
Ambrose, Bp of Milan	374	ii.	493
Amelius, a Platonic philosopher	263	iv.	200
Ammonius, author of the Harmony of the Gospels	220	i.	503
Ammonius Saccas, a heathen philosopher at Alexandria, master of Plotinus		iv.	239
Ammonius, a grammarian and priest at Alexandria, master of Socrates the historian	391	iv.	496
Amphilochius, Bp of Iconium	370	ii.	472
Anatolius, Bp of Laodicea	270	ii.	76
Anatolius, præfect of Illyricum in the time of Constantius, a zealous Gentile		iv.	384
Andrew, Bp of Cæsarea in Cappadocia	500	iii.	43
Angelics, an obscure sect		i.	587
Anonymous author of the second epistle ascribed to Clement of Rome, written in the third century		i.	393
Anonymous author against Artemon	212	i.	485
Anonymous author of *Questiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos*, ascribed to Justin Martyr, written in the fifth century		i.	343
Anonymous author of the epistle to Diognetus; the second or third century		i.	349
Anonymous author of a Computation of Easter	243	ii.	39
Anonymous author concerning Discipline	250	ii.	32
Anonymous author in praise of Martyrdom: the third century		ii.	33
Anonymous author against the Novatian Heretics	255	ii.	34
Anonymous author of the Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas	203	i.	579
Anonymous author of Rebaptizing	256	ii.	36
Anonymous author concerning Shows	250	ii.	32
Anonymous author of Circumcision; time uncertain		ii.	60
Anonymous writer against the Christians	303	iv.	252
Anonymous author against the Marcionites: time uncertain		ii.	406
Anonymous author of the Acts of Saturninus and others: at the beginning of the fourth century		ii.	298
Anonymous author of a Commentary upon the book of Job: the fourth century		ii.	313
Anonymous author of a treatise in Augustine's works	418	ii.	313
Antoninus the pious, emperor	138	iv.	68
Marcus Antoninus, emperor	161	iv.	72
Apelles, a Marcionite	about 160	iv.	639
Claudius Apollinaris, Bp of Hierapolis, in Phrygia	176	i.	439
Apollinarius, Bp of Laodicea in Syria	362	ii.	454
Apollonius, a Roman senator	186	i.	444
Another Apollonius, who wrote against the Montanists	211	i.	479
Apostolical constitutions and canons: time uncertain		ii.	421
Apostolics, an obscure sect		i.	588
Appion: in the second century		i.	413
Apthonius, a Manichee, in the fourth century		ii.	152
Apuleius, a Platonic philosopher	164	iv.	107
Arabianus: the second century		i.	413
Arator	544	iii.	57
Archelaus, Bp in Mesopotamia: the beginning of the fourth century		ii.	136
Arethas	540	iii.	56
Aristides	126	i.	437
Aristides the sophist	176	iv.	156
Aristo, of Pella	140	i.	438
Arius	316	ii.	303
Arnobius	306	ii.	244
Another Arnobius	460	ii.	256
Arrian, who published Epictetus	109	iv.	47
Artemon, an Unitarian in the second century		iv.	658
Asterius Urbanus	232	i.	489
Asterius, an Arian	330	ii.	313
Athanasius, Bp of Alexandria	326	ii.	398
Athenagoras	178	i.	377
The Audians	350	ii.	411
Six writers of the Augustan history	306	iv.	250
Augustine, Bp of Hippo Regius, in Africa	395	ii.	145, 149, 576
Aurelian, emperor	270	iv.	207

B.

Bacchylus	196	i.	445
Bardesanes	180	i.	441
St. Barnabas	71	i.	283
Basil, Bp of Ancyra in Galatia	336	ii.	314
Basil, Bp of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia	370	ii.	465
Basilides, a Heretic	about 132	iv.	534
Venerable Bede	701	iii.	78
Bemarchius, who wrote the history of Constantine	350	iv.	310
Beryllus, Bp of Bostra in Arabia	230	i.	524
Bruttius Præsens, a heathen historian	136	iv.	56

C.

Caians, or Cainites, an imaginary sect		iv.	652
Caius	212	i.	481
Candidus: in the second century		i.	245
Carpocrates, a Heretic in the second century,		iv.	556
The third council of Carthage	397	ii.	578
Cassian, a principal defender of Docetism, about	190	iv.	681
J. Cassian	424	iii.	16
M. A. Cassiodorius Senator	556	iii.	59
Celsus	176	iv.	113
Cerdon, a follower of Heracleon in the second century		iv.	586
Cerinthus, an early Heretic		iv.	554
Chalcidius, a philosopher; time uncertain		iv.	305
Chromatius, Bp of Aquileia	401	ii.	624
John Chrysostom, Bp of Constantinople	398	ii.	600
Claudian	396	iv.	288
Clement, Bp of Rome	96	i.	289
Clement of Alexandria	194	i.	392
Clementine Homilies: the second century		i.	472
Clementine Epitome: fourth or fifth century		i.	474
A Commentary upon thirteen of St. Paul's Epistles. And see Hilary, deacon of Rome	380	ii.	520
Commodian	270	ii.	71
Constantine the great, the first Christian emperor	306	ii.	321
Cornelius, Bp of Rome	251	ii.	41
Cosmas, of Alexandria	535	iii.	50
Cresconius, grammarian among the Donatists.	406	ii.	298
Cyprian, Bp of Carthage, in Africa	248	ii.	3
Cyril, Bp of Jerusalem	348	ii.	409
Cyril, Bp of Alexandria	412	iii.	8

D

J. Damascenus	730	iii.	79
Damascius	540	iv.	422
Damasus, Bp of Rome	366	ii.	464

Digitized by Google

	A. D.	VOL.	PAGE
Decius, emperor	249	iv.	191
Dictinius, Priscillianist, Bp and author	390	ii.	509
Didymus, of Alexandria	370	i.	147
		ii.	477
Dioclesian's Persecution	303—313	iv.	275
Diodorus, Bp of Tarsus	378	ii.	517
Dion Cassius	230	iv.	181
Dion Chrysostom, a sophist	98	iv.	160
Dionysius, Bp of Alexandria	247	i.	609
Dionysius, falsely called the Areopagite	490	iii.	40
		iv.	67
Dionysius, Bp of Corinth	170	i.	351
Dionysius, Bp of Rome	259	ii.	69
Donatists	312	ii.	296
See a History of divers of their Writers		298,	&c.
Donatus of Carthage	328	ii.	295
Ælius Donatus	356	iv.	495
Dorotheus, Presbyter of Antioch	290	ii.	86
Dorotheus, author of a Synopsis of the life and death of the prophets and apostles, of no great value, probably composed in the sixth century		ii.	87

E

Ebedjesu	1285	ii.	487
Ebionites		iii.	483
Elcesaites, or Ossens: their time uncertain		iv.	682
Ephrem, the Syrian	370	ii.	479
Epictetus	109	iv.	43
Epiphanius, Bp in Cyprus	368	ii.	416
Epistle of the church of Smyrna, concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp	167	i.	333
Epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons	177	i.	360
Epistle to Diognetes		i.	349
Eucherius, Bp of Lyons	434	iii.	29
Eunapius	396	iv.	380
Eunomius, Bp of Cyzicum	360	ii.	314
Eusebius, Bp of Cæsarea in Palestine	315	ii.	355
Eusebius, Bp of Laodicea	264	ii.	79
Eusebius, Bp of Emesa	340	ii.	315
Eusebius, Bp of Nicomedia	324	ii.	316
Eusebius, Bp of Vercelli	354	ii.	447
Eustathius, Bp of Antioch	320	ii.	397
Euthalius, Bp of Sulca, in Ægypt	458	iii.	38
Eutherius, Bp of Tyana	431	iii.	19
Euthymius	1110	iii.	89
Eutropius	370	iv.	369
Euzoius, Bp of Cæsarea in Palestine	366	ii.	317

F

Facundus, Bp of Hermiane, in Africa	540	iii.	55
Faustinus and Marcellinus, Luciferians	383	ii.	450
Faustus, a Manichæan Bishop	384	ii.	152
Rufus Festus, proconsul of Asia	374	iv.	450
Firmilian, Bp of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia	233	i.	575
Fortunatianus, Bp of Aquileia	340	ii.	443
Fronto, a writer against the Christians, master to M. Antoninus		iv.	112

G

Galen	180	iv.	16
Gallus, emperor	251	iv.	193
Gaudentius, Bp of Brescia	387	ii.	523
Gaudentius, a Donatist bishop in Numidia	411	ii.	299
Gelasius, Bp of Rome	496	iii.	42
Geminianus or Geminian	232	i.	580
Gennadius, presbyter of Marseilles	494	iii.	41
George, an Arian Bp of Laodicea	340	ii.	317
Gregory, Bp of Neocæsarea	243	i.	591
Gregory, Bp of Illiberis	355	ii.	451
Gregory Nazianzen	370	ii.	469
Gregory Nyssen	371	ii.	474
Gregory I. Bp of Rome	590	iii.	68

H

Hegesippus	173	i.	355
Heliodorus, author of the Ethiopicks		iv.	356
Helladius, a grammarian and priest at Constantinople		iv.	496
Heraclean, Bp of Chalcedon: time uncertain		ii.	144
Heracleon, a Valentinian, time and country uncertain		iv.	583
Heraclitus	196	i.	413
Hermas	100	i.	304
Hermias	200	i.	414
Hermogenes, a heretic	about 180	iv.	663
Hesychius, Bp in Ægypt	296	ii.	113
Hierax, a learned Ægyptian	302	ii.	153
Hierocles, who set up Apollonius Tyanæus as a rival to our Saviour	303	iv.	253,4
Hierocles of Alexandria, a Platonic philosopher	450	iv.	416
Hilary, Bp of Poictiers	354	ii.	412
Hilary, deacon of Rome	380	ii.	520
Himerius, a sophist	363	iv.	349
Hippolytus	220	i.	495

I

Jamblichus	313	iv.	270
Jehudah, or Judah the holy, composer of the Mishna	180	iii.	547
			551
Jerom	392	ii.	531
Ignatius, Bp of Antioch	107	i.	313
The Imperfect Work upon St. Matthew	560	iii.	62
Innocent I. Bp of Rome	402	ii.	628
John, a martyr in Dioclesian's time	310	ii.	119
Josephus	76	iii.	488
Josippon, or Joseph Ben Gorion	930	iii.	560
Irenæus, Bp of Lyons in Gaul	178	i.	368
Isidore, of Pelusium	412	iii.	6
Isidore, Bp of Seville	596	iii.	73
Judas	202	i.	579
Julian, emperor	361	iv.	311
Junilius, Bp in Africa	550	iii.	58
Justin Martyr	140	i.	341
Juvenal	100	iii.	616
Juvencus	330	ii.	407

L

Firmianus Lactantius	306	ii.	257
Diogenes Laertius	210	iv.	171
Lampridius, one of the writers of the Augustan history	306	iv.	251
The Council of Laodicea	363	ii.	414
Latronian of Spain, a Priscillianist	380	ii.	503
Leo I. Bp of Rome	440	iii.	34
Leontius, of Constantinople	610	iii.	76
Leucius, a writer of apocryphal books, in the second century		ii.	230
		iv.	625
Libanius, a sophist	370	iv.	355
Longinus	264	iv.	202
Lucian, presbyter of Antioch, and martyr	290	ii.	109

Digitized by Google

	A. D.	VOL.	PAGE
Lucian, of Samosata	176	iv.	149
Lucifer, Bp of Cagliari, in Sardinia	354	ii.	449
Lucius, Bp of Rome	252	ii.	42,43
Lucius, Arian Bp of Alexandria, in the fourth century		ii.	318

M

Macrobius, Bp of the Donatists at Rome	370	ii.	299
Macrobius	400	iv.	392
Malchion, presbyter of Antioch	270	i.	74
Mani and his followers: before the end of the third century		ii.	139
Marc, and the Marcosians; in the second century		iv.	577
Amm. Marcellinus	380	iv.	371
Marcellus, Bp. of Ancyra, in Galatia	320	ii.	395
Marcion, a follower of Cerdon	130	iv.	588
Marinus, successor of Proclus	485	iv.	419
Martial	100	iii.	615
Julius Firmicus Maternus	345	ii.	408
Maximin, an Arian Bp in Africa	428	ii.	318
Maximin II. emperor, his letter in favour of the Christians.	312	iv.	288
Maximus: in the second century		i.	413
Meletius, an Ægyptian Bp, and his followers.	306	ii.	129
Melito, Bp of Sardis, in Lydia	177	i.	358
Methodius, Bp of Olympus, in Lycia	290	ii.	98
Miltiades, an apologist for the Christian religion	180	i.	382
M. Minucius Felix, an apologist for the Christian religion	210	i.	477
Mishna	180	iii.	547, 549
Modestus	176	i.	439
Montanus, and the Montanists in the second century		iv.	669
Musanus	176	i.	439

N

Narcissus, Bp of Jerusalem	196	i.	445
Nazarenes in the first century		iii.	484
Nepos, an Ægyptian bishop	244	i.	614
Nice, the council of	325	ii.	348
Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople	806	iii.	47
Nicephorus Callisti	1325	iii.	90
Noëtus	220	i.	581
Nonnus	410	iii.	5
Novatus, otherwise called Novatian	251	ii.	43
Novatians	251	ii.	52
Numenius, a philosopher, time uncertain		iv.	205

O

Oecumenius	950	iii.	83
Olympiodorus	425	iv.	396
Ophians, or Ophites, supposed to be the same as the Sethians		iv.	655
Optatus, of Milevi, in Africa	370	ii.	490
Oribasius, a philosopher, a friend of Julian.		iv.	386
Origen	230	i.	519
Origenists: an obscure sect		i.	589
Paul Orosius, a Christian writer about the beginning of the fifth century		iv.	31
Ossens. See Elcesaites			

P

Pacian, Bp of Barcelona	370	ii.	490
Palladius	408	iii.	4
Palmas, Bp of Amastris, in Pontus	170	i.	439
Pamphilus	294	ii.	116
Pantænus, catechist at Alexandria	192	i.	390
Papias, Bp of Hierapolis, in Phrygia	116	i.	336
Parmenian, Donatist Bp at Carthage	350	ii.	299
Paul, of Samosata, Bp of Antioch	260	i.	620
Paulicians, in the seventh century		ii.	238
Paulinus, Bp of Nola	403	ii.	629
Pausanias	180	iii.	532
Pelagius	405	ii.	630
Peter, Bp of Alexandria	300	ii.	127
Petilian, Donatist Bp at Cirtha, in Numidia.	411	ii.	300
Philaster, Bp of Brescia	380	ii.	522
Phileas, Bp of Thmuis, in Ægypt	296	ii.	126
Philip, Bp of Gortyna, in Crete	170	i.	439
Philip, emperor	244	iv.	187
Philoromus, of Alexandria	296	ii.	126
Philostorgius, a learned Arian historian	425	ii.	318
Philostratus, his Life of Apollonius Tyanæus	210	iv.	260
Phlegon	138	iv.	58
Phœbadius, Bp of Agen in Gaul	359	ii.	452
Photinus	341	ii.	443
Photius, patriarch of Constantinople	858	iii.	81
Pierius, presbyter at Alexandria	283	ii.	84
Pinytus, Bp of Gnossus, in Crete	170	i.	439
Pliny the elder	77	iii.	609
Pliny the younger, and Trajan	106, 107	iv.	3
Plutarch, concerning the death of Pan	33	iii.	606
Polycarp, Bp of Smyrna, in Asia	108	i.	325
Polycrates, Bp of Ephesus	196	i.	412
Pontius, deacon at Carthage	251	ii.	31
Porphyry	270	iv.	209
Praxagoras, of Athens	350	iv.	309
Praxeas, an Unitarian, about the end of the second century		iv.	676
Priscillian, Bp of Abila, in Spain, and his followers	378	ii.	497
Proclus, president of the school at Athens.	464	iv.	417
Procopius, a Christian writer of the history of Justinian	552	iv.	428
Proculus, a Montanist	212	i.	579
Prodicus, a heretic	between 120 and 130	iv.	571
Prosper of Aquitain	434	iii.	20
Works ascribed to Prosper.	434	iii.	21
Prudentius, of Saragossa in Spain	405	iii.	3

Q

Quadratus, apologist for the Christian religion in the time of Adrian	126	i.	426

R

Recognitions: in the second century		i.	465
Rheticus, Bp of Autun, in Gaul	313	ii.	441
Rhodon	190	i.	445
Rufinus, presbyter of Aquileia	397	ii.	572
Rutilius	418	iv.	394

S

Sabellius	256	i.	618
Sabinus, an Arian ecclesiastical historian	376	ii.	320
Salvian, presbyter of Marseilles	440	iii.	36
Saturninus, a heretic		iv.	533
Scythian, one of Mani's predecessors: in the third century		ii.	170
Secundinus, of Rome, a Manichæan author.	406	ii.	155
Cæcillius Sedulius	434	iii.	31

Digitized by Google

	A. D.	VOL.	PAGE
Another Sedulius	818	iii.	32
Seneca		iii.	615, 616
Serapion, Bp of Antioch	200	i.	415
Serapion, Bp of Thmuis, in Ægypt	347	ii.	145
Servius	412	iv.	496
Sethians	about 150	iv.	647
Severian, Bp of Galbala, in Syria	401	ii.	619
Severus, Alexander	222	iv.	177
Severus, Septimius	202	iv.	165
Severus, Sulpicius	401	ii.	621
Sextus: in the second century		i.	413
Sibylline Oracles: in the second century		i.	449
Silvanus, Bp of Gaza, in Palestine	310	ii.	119
Simplicius	550	iv.	427
Sisinnius, a disciple of Mani	about 300	ii.	144
Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian	440	iii.	92
Sophronius	390	ii.	525
Soter, Bp of Rome	164	i.	438
Sozomen, the ecclesiastical historian	440	iii.	93
Spartian, one of the writers of the Augustan history	306	iv.	250
Stephen, Bp of Laodicea	280	ii.	79
Suetonius	110	iii.	618
Symmachus	200	i.	446
Symmachus, præfect of Rome	384	iv.	465
Syrianus	450	iv.	421

T

Tacitus	100	iii.	610
Talmud	500	iii.	547, 552
Tatian	172	i.	353
Terebinthus, one of Mani's predecessors: in the third century		ii.	171
Tertullian	200	i.	416
Testaments of the twelve patriarchs: in the second century		i.	416, 457
Thallus: time not known		iv.	66
Themison, a Montanist	211	i.	480
Themistius	364	iv.	350
Theodore, Bp of Heraclea, in Thrace	334	ii.	320
Theodore, Bp of Mopsuestia, in Cilicia	394	ii.	526
Theodoret	423	iii.	9, 93
Theodotus, Bp of Laodicea, in Syria	308	ii.	79
Theodotus, the tanner, an Unitarian	308	iv.	659
Theognostus, of Alexandria	282	ii.	80
Theonas, Bp of Alexandria	290	ii.	83
Theophilus, Bp of Antioch	181	i.	383
Theophilus, Bp of Cæsarea	196	i.	445
Theophylact	1070	iii.	85
Tiberian, of Spain, a Priscillianist	390	ii.	497
Tichonius, a Donatist writer	380	ii.	300
Titus, Bp of Bostra, in Arabia	362	ii.	146
Toldoth Jeschu, written in the 14th or 15th century		iii.	574 note [c]
Triphyllius, Bp in Cyprus	340	ii.	442
Tryphon	233	i.	581

V

Valens, deacon of Ælia, or Jerusalem, martyr in Diocletian's persecution	294	ii.	119
Valentinus (the gnostic) in the second century		i.	410 note [a]
Valerian, and Gallienus, emperors	253	iv.	194
Valesians, an obscure sect		i.	586
Vegetius	390	iv.	380
Victor, Bp of Rome	196	i.	445
Victor of Antioch: a Commentary upon St. Mark's Gospel, ascribed to him	401	ii.	625
Victor Tununensis	566	iii.	67
Victorinus, Bp of Pettaw in Germany	290	ii.	88
C. M. Victorinus Afer	360	ii.	453
Vincentius Lirinensis	434	iii.	23
Vitellius, a Donatist	344	ii.	300
Ulphilas, Bp. of the Goths	365	ii.	320
Ulpian	222	iv.	179
Vopiscus, one of the Augustan writers	306	iv.	251

X

Xiphilinus, a Christian, wrote an Epitome of Dion Cassius: in the 11th century		iv.	101

Z

Zosimus	425	iv.	397

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INDEX V.

AN

ALPHABETICAL TABLE OF PRINCIPAL MATTERS.

A

ABERCIUS MARCELLUS, to whom Asterius Urbanus inscribed his books against the Montanists, vol. i. p. 490
Abgarus, king of Edessa, his letter to our Saviour, and our Saviour's rescript, with remarks, iii. 594 to 598
Ablabius, a Novatian bishop, ii. 56
Abominations standing in the holy place, explained, iii. 496
Abraxas, this name and the gems called *Abraxæi*, as used by the Basilidians, iv. 536, 545 to 547; these gems used as charms by the heathens, 548; an examination of Montfaucon's figures, 549 to 551; from these gems the heathenish custom of using *Abracadabra* as a charm, 551, 552; arguments from Beausobre that these gems were not used by Christians, and that Abraxas was not the god of the Basilidians, 552, 553; it was the first of their 365 heavens, or the chief of the 365 angels, 547
Abulpharagius, see *Bar-Hebræus*
Acacius, Bp of Cæsarea, ii. 311; wrote the life of his predecessor Eusebius, 356
Acclamations, see *Applauses*
Acesius, a Novatian bishop at Constantinople, said to have been at the council of Nice, ii. 53; what Constantine said to him, ib. commended, 54
Achaia, the extent of that province, i. 20
Achillas, presbyter and catechist, afterwards bishop of Alexandria, ii. 84
Acme, a Jewess, put to death at Rome, i. 187
Acosta (*Uriel*) whipped in the synagogue at Amsterdam, i. 24
Acts of Andrew, and Thomas, and John, and other apostles, i. 539; ii. 229, 231, 232, 370, 375, 388
Acts, or journeying of the apostles, forged by Leucius, iv. 637, 638.
Acts of the Apostles, why so called, ii. 618; the importance of this book, i. 367, 368, 422; iii. 77; observations upon it, iii. 206 to 212; in what part of the N. T. placed by the ancients, i. 432; iii. 456, 462.

Referred to by Clement of Rome, i. 295, 296; by Ignatius, 318; Polycarp, 329; Just. Martyr, 345; the martyrs at Lyons, 361; Polycrates, 413; the Testaments of the twelve patriarchs, 464; the Recognitions, 470; and the Acts of Paul and Thecla, 449; quoted, and ascribed to St. Luke by Irenæus, 367; by Clement of Alexandria, 394, 395, 399, 400; and by Tertullian, 422; received by the Nazaræan Christians, iii. 484; quoted, and ascribed to St. Luke by Origen, ii. 533, 535; an uncontested book, and a book of authority, according to the same, 535, 545; received by Asterius Urbanus, 491; Hippolytus, 497, 502; received and quoted by Dionysius of Alexandria, 610, 635; by Cyprian, ii. 13; Pontius, 31; the author of Rebaptizing, 39; joined with the epistles in Cyprian's time, 29; a remarkable quotation of this book, 40; probably received by Novatus, 62, and the Novatians, 66; received by Commodian, 73; Victorinus, 96; Methodius, 105; Pamphilus, 123; Peter, Bp of Alexandria, 129; received and quoted as a book of authority by Archelaus, Bp in Mesopotamia, 189; Serapion, Bp of Thmuis, 146; Titus of Bostra, 147; Didymus of Alexandria, 214, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, 527, 531; both these wrote commentaries upon this book, 478, 527; whether received by the Manichees 183, 214; received by some of the Paulicians, 289; referred to by Arnobius, 255; by the other Arnobius, 256; by Lactantius, 285; the author of the book of the deaths of persecutors, 292; well known in Africa, 294; received by the Donatists, who in general received the same scriptures with other Christians; this book in particular, which is largely quoted by Petilian and Tichonius, Donatist writers, 301; received by the Arians, who likewise received the same books of scripture which other Christians did, 309, 310; a book universally acknowledged according to Eusebius of Cæsarea, 370, 381; ascribed by him to St. Luke, 371, 381; who is sometimes said by him to have been of Antioch, and a physician. Quoted by Adamantius, author of a Dialogue against the Marcionites, 406; ascribed to Luke by Athanasius, 401, and Epiphanius, 418; received and appointed to be publicly read, by the *Apostolical constitutions*, 438; mentioned in the 85th apostolical canon, 440; quoted by Lucifer of Cagliari, 450; Faustinus, 451; Gregory of Iliberis, 452; Victorinus, 454; Gregory Nazianzen, 470; Ephrem, 482; Optatus, 491; ascribed to St. Luke by Amphilochius, 473; Gregory Nyssen, 475; Ebedjesu, 488; Ambrose of Milan, 495; received by Jerom, and ascribed by him to St. Luke, 548; by Rufinus, 573; Augustine, 584; Chrysostom, 604, 605; is in the Catalogue of the third council of Carthage, 574; publicly read, well known, and much valued, as a book of great importance, 585, 604, 605; received and quoted by Severian, Bp of Gabala, in Syria, 620; by Sulpicius Severus, and ascribed by him to St. Luke, 622; received by Chromatius, Bp of Aquileia, 625; Victor of Antioch, 626; Innocent I, Bp of Rome, 628; Paulinus, Bp of Nola, and ascribed by him to St. Luke, 629; received by Pelagius, 631; Palladius, author of the life of Chrysostom, iii. 5; Isidore, of Pelusium, and ascribed by him to St. Luke, 7, as also by Theodoret, 10, 11, and note [p]; quoted by Eutherius, Bp of Tyana in Cappadocia, 19; Salvian 36; Gelasius, Bp of Rome, 42; Andrew, Bp of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, 43; is in the Alexandrian MS. 45; in the Stichometry of Nicephorus, 48, and that of Cotelerius, 49; ascribed to St. Luke by Euthalius, 39, who also published an edition of this book, and divided it into chapters and sections, 38; ascribed to St. Luke by Arethas, 57; by Arator, who turned the whole into verse, 57; ascribed to St. Luke by Cassiodorus, who wrote a commentary upon it, 61; received as a canonical book by Junilius, an African bishop, 58; ascribed to St. Luke by the author of the *Imperfect work* upon St. Matthew, 66; by Isidore, of Seville, 74; received by Leontius, 77; ascribed to Luke by Damascenus, 80; Nicephorus Callisti, 91; Oecumenius, 84, and Theophylact, 85; which two last mentioned wrote commentaries upon this book. It is in all the catalogues of the books of

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the New Testament. See *Catalogues*. Received by the Valentinians, 461; always universally acknowledged, ii. 369; iii. 455
Rejected by the Marcionites, iv. 617
Acts of Paul, i. 555; ii. 370, 388
Acts of Paul and Thecla, i. 435, 448, 449; how quoted by Faustus the Manichee, ii. 229
Acts of Peter, supposed to be quoted by Clement of Alexandria, i. 410. See ii. 370, 383; not received by the ancients, 370, 383
Acts of Pontius Pilate, and his letter to Tiberius, iii. 599 to 601
Acts of the senate of Rome, and of governors of provinces, and other Acts, iii. 600, 601
Adam, his fall foreseen, and therefore the sexes made, iii. 13; Adam and Eve the first pair according to the Manichees, ii. 195
Adamantius, author of a Dialogue against the Marcionites, ii. 406
Adamians, or *Adamites*, iv. 575; probably an imaginary sect, *ibid.*; objections to this answered, 576
Addas, an ancient disciple of Mani, taught Turbo, ii. 144; See *Adimantus* and *Buddas*
Addison, his observations upon the fortitude of the Christians in early times, iv. 94, 95
Adimantus, a Manichæan writer, his history, ii. 150; whether he was the same as Addas, 150, 151; his work much esteemed, 151; called Terebinthus and Buddas, 171
Adrian, his time, and general character, iv. 51; not reckoned among persecuting emperors, 51; his rescript in favour of the Christians, 51, 52; his letter to Servianus, 54; his moderation commended, 53; whether he intended to erect temples to Jesus Christ? 54 to 56
Ædesius, martyr at Alexandria in Diocletian's persecution, iv. 256
Aerians, ii. 413, 414, 421
Aetius, an Arian writer, his history, ii. 311, 312; his dispute with Apthonius a Manichee, 152
Africanus, Julius, his history, i. 513; his learning, 515; his testimony to the scriptures, *ibid.*; a man of great eminence, 518
Agapæ, or *love feasts* among the Christians; their design and use, and the time when they were celebrated, iv. 24, 150
Agape, a Priscillianist woman, ii. 498
Agapius, Bp of Cæsarea, ii. 118
Agapius, a Manichæan author, his history and works, ii. 151
Agathias, his history of Justinian and his character, iv. 428
Agathobulus, a Jewish writer mentioned by Anatolius, ii. 78
Agelius, a Novatian bishop of Constantinople, his history and character, ii. 54, 55
Agobardus, Bp of Lyons in the ninth century, i. 448
Agony, a remark upon our Lord's *agony* in the garden, v. 375, note [a]
Agrippa Castor, a writer against Basilides in the second century, i. 437
Agrippa the Great, or the Elder. See *Herod Agrippa*
Agrippa the Younger, son of Herod Agrippa, i. 16, 17; his several preferments, 18; was a Jew, *ibid*; had the government of the temple, 18, 45; his speech to dissuade the Jews from the war with the Romans, 45, 148; raiseth his palace at Jerusalem, 100; intercedes with Claudius in favour of the Jews, 100
Agrippa (*Marcus*) confirms the privileges of the Jews in Ionia, i. 97
Agrippa, and his son Monbaz, put to death at Rome by Vespasian, according to Josippon, iii. 563
Agrippina, mother of Nero, puts Lollia Paulina to death, i. 13
Ainsworth's account of the seven precepts of Noah, v. 495
Akibas, a Jewish Rabbin of great note, his history and character, iii. 550, 551, 553
Alaric, his history, so far as written by Zosimus, iv. 411 to 413. See *Rome*
Albinus, procurator of Judea, for money releaseth prisoners, i. 44, 92; succeeded Festus, 44, 45, 92
Alcibiades, a martyr at Lyons, who led a very austere life, i. 362; iv. 91
Aldrich, (*H.*) commended, i. 226, 227
Alexander, Bp of Alexandria, his history, ii. 301; his testimony to the scriptures, 302, 303
Alexander, Bp of Jerusalem, scholar of Clement of Alexandria, i. 392; colleague of Narcissus, 446; his honourable testimony to the same Clement, 393; his history, 491 to 493; erected a library at Jerusalem, 494; his character, *ibid.*; he ordained Origen, 522; and heard him, 523; his sufferings and martyrdom, iv. 167, 192
Alexander the collier, his ordination, i. 594
Alexander of Lycopolis in Egypt, his time and character, ii. 144, 145; iv. 307, 308; his testimony to the scriptures, and to the Christian doctrine or philosophy, 308, 309
Alexander, one of the martyrs at Lyons, a Phrygian, and by profession a physician, iv. 89
Alexander Severus. See *Severus*
Alexandra, widow of Alexander Jannæus, a religious woman, i. 67
Alexandria, an ancient Christian school there, i. 390
Alexandrian MS. its time and contents, with remarks, iii. 44 to 47
Alogians, said by Epiphanius to have rejected all St. John's writings, ii. 419; iv. 690; never was such a heresy, 691; Epiphanius's account of them, *ibid.*; a groundless supposition that the Unitarians of the second century rejected John's gospel, 692
Altar, the communion table not so called in early times, ii. 430
The altar to the unknown God at Athens; the occasion of erecting it, and that the inscription was in the singular number, iv. 171 to 176
The altar of victory, an account of it, iv. 454 to 456; and see *Senate*
Alypius, Augustine's friend, ii. 150; what induced him to be a Manichee? 159
Ambrose, Origen's friend, said to have been at first a Marcionite, i. 495; his history, 521, 522
Ambrose, Bp of Milan, his time, and character, and works, ii. 493; quotes apocryphal books of the Old Testament, 493; sent ambassador to Maximus by Valentinian the younger, 507; proposes terms for reconciling the Priscillianists to the church, 509; his confutation of Symmachus's petition, iv. 461, 462
Ambrosiaster, quoted, ii. 15; supposed to be Hilary, and author of *A commentary upon thirteen of St. Paul's epistles*, 520
Amelius, his history, and time, and testimony to St. John's gospel, iv. 200 to 202
Ammianus Marcellinus. See *Marcellinus*
Ammias of Philadelphia, said to have been a prophet of the New Testament, i. 491
Ammonianus, a learned grammarian, iv. 425
Ammonius, a Christian writer, author of a Harmony of the four gospels, and other works; his history and testimony to the books of the New Testament, i. 503 to 505; different from Ammonius Saccas, 504; whether his and Tatian's Harmonies are still extant, 505 to 507; extracts out of a Harmony ascribed to Tatian, 508 to 511; and out of a Harmony ascribed to Ammonius, 511, 512
Ammonius Saccas, a celebrated heathen philosopher at Alexandria, his history and character, i. 504; different from Ammonius, author of divers Christian writings iv. 239 to 241
Ammonius, a learned heathen, and grammarian at Alexandria, and afterwards at Constantinople, in the fourth century, master of Socrates, iii. 92; iv. 470, 473

Digitized by Google

Amphilochius, Bp of Iconium, his time and works, ii. 472; a catalogue of books ascribed to him, 472; his zeal against Arians, and other heretics, unjustifiable, 473, 474
Ananus the younger, high-priest, a Sadducee, i. 45, 69; puts St. James and others to death by his council, 45
Anatolius, Bp of Laodicea in Syria, his history and works, ii. 76 to 78; his testimony to the scriptures, 78, 79
Anatolius, master of Jamblichus, ii. 78
Anatolius, præfect of Illyricum in the time of Constantius, a zealous Gentile, and an author, and much commended by Eunapius and Libanius, iv. 384, 385
Andragathias, a philosopher; Theodore of Mopsuestia and Chrysostom studied under him, ii. 526
Andrew, Bp of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, his time and commentary upon the Revelation, iii. 43, 44
Anencletus, an early bishop of Rome, i. 291
Angelics, i. 587, 588
Angels, an opinion of many of the ancient Christians concerning the occasion of their fall, ii. 73, 103, 277
Anicetus, Bp of Rome, i. 325, 356
Annas and Caiaphas, high-priests, i. 209
Anonymous author of the *second epistle* ascribed to Clement of Rome, written probably in the third century, i. 303, 304
Anonymous author of *Quæstiones et Responsiones et orthodoxæ*, ascribed to Justin Martyr, i. 343
Anonymous author of the epistle to Diognetus, i. 349
Anonymous author against Artemon, i. 485
Anonymous author of the Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas, i. 578, 579; his testimony to the scriptures, 579
Anonymous author concerning Discipline, ii. 32
Anonymous author concerning Shows, ii. 32
Anonymous author in praise of Martyrdom, ii. 33
Anonymous author against the Novatian Heretic, ii. 34
Anonymous author of Rebaptizing, or of the Baptism of Heretics, ii. 36
Anonymous author of a Computation of Easter, ii. 39
Anonymous author of a tract concerning the true circumcision, ii. 60, 148
Anonymous author of a book in verse against the Marcionites, ii. 92; extracts out of it, *ibid.*
Anonymous author of the Acts of Saturninus and others, ii. 298
Anonymous Arian author of a commentary upon the book of Job, ii. 313
Anonymous Arian author of a discourse in Augustine's works, ii. 313
Anonymous author of a History of the Manichees, ii. 148
Anonymous author of *The morality of the New Testament digested under various heads*; quoted, iii. 112
Anonymous writer against the Christians at the beginning of Dioclesian's persecution, of whom Lactantius gives an account, iii. 252, 253
Anthimus, Bp of Nicomedia, his martyrdom, ii. 110, 113
Anthimus, Bp of Tyana in Cappadocia, contemporary with Basil, i. 599
Antichrist, opinions concerning him, ii. 73, 94
Antioch, Bishops of that church from the apostles to Theophilus the sixth Bishop, i. 383; who was succeeded by Maximin, and he by Serapion the eighth, 414; their successors enumerated to the year 260, i. 580; the great prerogatives of that city, that the disciples were first called Christians there, ii. 612; the number of Christians there in the time of Chrysostom, and of the poor maintained by that church, and the house to be seen where St. Paul dwelt, 614; Christian assemblies more numerous there than at Constantinople, *ibid*; and see *Councils*
Antipater, eldest son of Herod the Great, concerned in the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem, i. 186; see likewise 154; his design to poison his father, 187, 190; the time of his last journey to Rome settled, 188, 189; his death, 187, 232
Antipodes, denied by Lactantius, ii. 277; believed by Mani, 166
Antonia, widow of Drusus, her excellent character, i. 128
Antonia, the castle at Jerusalem, described, i. 58
Arrius Antoninus, proconsul of Asia, how he treated the Christians, and the time of his persecution, iv. 33, 34
Antoninus the pious, his time, and excellent character, iv. 68; was favourable to the Christians, 68; his edict to the states of Asia, 69; the genuineness of it asserted, 70, 71, and 105; he wrote also in favour of the Christians to the Thessalonians, Athenians, and all the Greeks in general, 70
Antoninus, (*Marcus, the philosopher*) his time and character, iv. 72, 73; his passage concerning the Christians in his Meditations, with notes and observations, 74 to 78; a general account of the persecutions in his reign, and that he was not friendly to the Christians, and the reasons of it, 78 to 81, 473; an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, and others, at Smyrna, in the year 168, 82 to 84; the martyrs at Lyons in the year 177, 84 to 91; remarks upon that history, 91 to 94; a general account of a remarkable deliverance obtained by him in Germany, in the year 174, 95 to 106; that deliverance ascribed by some to the prayers of a legion of Christians in his army, afterwards called the *Thundering, or Thunderbolt legion*, 95, 96; observations upon that history, 96 to 104; a summary of the arguments upon that subject, 104 to 106
Apelles, a follower of Marcion, i. 431, 445; ii. 493; his gospel, 562; received the New Testament in general, iii. 132; his time, iv. 639; his connection with Philumene, 640; the story of his incontinence false, *ibid*; did not discourage inquiry, 641; of his writings, 642; his peculiar principles, 642 to 644; what scriptures he received, 645 to 647
Apocalypse of Elijah, ii. 562
Apocryphal, equivalent to spurious, i. 476
APOCRYPHAL BOOKS, not quoted by the apostolical fathers, i. 289, 303, 313, 324; nor by Irenæus nor Tertullian, iii. 131; forged by Heretics, i. 358; how quoted by Clement of Alexandria, 407 to 409; much despised by Christians, 558; in some of them a future state clearly mentioned, 560; few or none of them composed before the beginning of the second century, except the gospel according to the Hebrews, iii. 132; the Acts of Paul and Thecla must have been composed before the end of the first century, or in the beginning of the second, *ibid.*; Jewish apocryphal books said to be referred to in the New Testament, i. 557, 558; how they are quoted by Origen, 551; by Cyprian, ii. 29, 30; Christian apocryphal books not quoted as of authority, by Dionysius of Alexandria, i. 650; not quoted by Cyprian, ii. 29; nor by Novatus, 65; nor by Methodius, 109; used by the Manichees, 227; what they were, 229, 230; a definition of such books, 228; forged by Leucius, 230; remarks upon them, 231, 232; they confirm the history of the authentic books of the New Testament, 230; iii. 131; used by the Priscillianists, 512; rejected by Eusebius of Cæsarea, 388 to 395; and Athanasius, 400. *Apocryphal books* of the Old Testament, quoted by Ambrose, Bp of Milan, 493, 494; but he rejects Christian apocryphal books, 494; no notice taken of such books by Gaudentius, Bp of Brescia, 524; the controverted, or spurious, or apocryphal books of the N. T. which are taken notice of by Eusebius, 386, 388; apocryphal books of the O. and N. T. mentioned by Jerom, 561, 565; much censured and condemned by him, 542, 550, 563 to 567; some of them composed with a view to explain the New Testament, 563, 564; apocryphal books of the Old and New Testament mentioned with contempt by Augustine, 581; such books seldom quoted by Gregory, Bp of Rome, 69; are of no authority, 75; how quoted in the imperfect work, 64, 65; such books in the early times of Christianity, afford no valid argument against the genuineness, or the authority of the

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books of the New Testament now generally received, 131 to 134; but confirm it, iv. 639
Apollinaris (*Claudius*) Bp of Hierapolis in Phrygia, i. 439 to 441
Apollinarius, Bp of Laodicea in Syria, his time and family, ii. 454, 455; his Apology for the Christian religion against Porphyry, *ibid*, 456, 457, 458; his commentaries upon the scriptures, and his other works, 456 to 458; his peculiar opinions, 558 to 461; his works relating to those opinions, 462, 463; his character, 463; wrote against Dionysius of Alexandria concerning the Millennium, i. 639
Apollonia, a virgin martyr at Alexandria, before the publication of Decius's edict against the Christians, iv. 192
Apollonius, a Roman senator, Christian, apologist, and martyr, i. 444; his remarkable martyrdom, iv. 300, 301
Apollonius, an ecclesiastical man, who wrote against the Montanists, his history, i. 479; different from Apollonius, senator and martyr, 480; says that Christ commanded his apostles to stay twelve years at Jerusalem after his ascension, *ibid*; received *The Revelation*, 481; Tertullian wrote against him, 480
Apollonius, a stoic philosopher, in the time of M. Antoninus, i. 442, 443
Apollonius, or *Apollonides*, reckoned among the followers of Artemon, i. 487
Apollonius Tyanæus, set up by Hierocles as a rival with our Saviour, iv. 254 to 256; remarks upon his life written by Philostratus, 260, &c.; his obscurity for a good while, 259; his letter to Titus, after the conquest of Judea, iii. 533
Apologies (*early*) *for the Christian religion*: to the emperor Adrian by Quadratus, i. 436; by Aristides, 487; to Antoninus the pious, Justin Martyr's first apology, 342; to M. Antoninus the philosopher, his second apology, *ibid*; to the same emperor, apologies presented by Melito, bishop of Sardis, 359; by Athenagoras, 378; by Cl. Apollinaris, bishop of Hierapolis, 439; to the princes of this world by Miltiades, 382. In the reign of Commodus, three books to Autolicus, a learned heathen, by Theophilus bishop of Antioch, 383; in the same reign the apology of Apollonius in the senate, 444; in the reign of Severus, Tertullian's celebrated apology to the Roman presidents, 416 to 418; and his apologetical discourse to Scapula, proconsul of Africa; beside his two books to the nations, and many books of others, written in the first two centuries, or the beginning of the third, against Jews and Gentiles.
Apostles, sometimes used in a lower sense, as equivalent to apostolical, i. 406; iii. 37.
Apostles, had the largest measure of the gifts of the spirit, and therefore had the highest authority in the church, i. 421; said to be commanded by Christ to stay twelve years at Jerusalem after his ascension, 480; their employments before they followed Jesus, ii. 428; twelve in number, and four evangelists, 620; said to be fourteen apostles, 383; said to have chosen to themselves several provinces of the world, 487; staid a good while in Judea after Christ's ascension, iii. 153; the time when they left Judea to go and preach the gospel in other countries, 167 to 173; were all of the Jewish nation, ii. 521; there are no certain accounts of the places where many of them preached after they left Judea, iii. 159; they did not all die by martyrdom, ii. 366; iii. 159, 438. *They* only under the New Testament write doctrinal and preceptive books of authority, i. 636, 637. ii. 29, 375, 620. iii. 42, 52 to 54, 142, 147; the whole world committed to them, ii. 612; not forward to write, 368; the usefulness of their writings, 378, 379; their sincerity, 365; four were fishermen, two publicans, Peter chief, and two others also said to be chiefs, 612; were illiterate, and mean, 613, 615; most of them born in Galilee, iii. 13; the prerogatives of their high office, ii. 612; one of which is, writing epistles to the churches as masters, which should be of authority, 554; their just sentiments, and excellent philosophy, 615. St. Mark and St. Luke wrote, when their gospels might be approved by apostles, 585
Apostolical benediction, a sermon, v. 212
Apostolical constitutions and canons. See *Constitutions*.
Apostolical fathers, do not quote apocryphal books, i. 324; general observations upon their testimony to the books of the New Testament, 334, 335
Apostolical men, known companions of apostles, (such as Mark and Luke) may write historical books of authority, i. 376, 407, 409, 420, 637
Apostolicon of Marcion, consisted of ten of the epistles of St. Paul, iv. 617
Apostolics, i. 588
Appeals, made to Rome from the provinces, i. 129
Apphianus, a martyr at Cæsarea, in Diocletian's persecution, iv. 256
Appion; author of a treatise upon the six day's work, i. 413
Applauses and acclamations, in use among the ancients, i. 621, 622
Apthonius, a learned Manichee, ii. 152
Apuleius, of Madaura in Africa, his time and works, iv. 107; his passages concerning the Christians, 107, 108; miracles ascribed to him by heathen people, 109. iv. 254, 266; the design of his work called, *The Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass*, iii. 108 to 110
Aquila and Priscilla, their history, iii. 278, 279
Aquila, author of a Greek version of the Old Testament in the time of Adrian, i. 446
Aram, who meant by that name, ii. 527
Arator, his work entitled *Apostolical history*, in verse, composed out of the book of *The Acts*, ii. 57
Arbogastes, an account of him, iv. 389
Arch of Titus at Rome, iii. 527, 533, 573
Archelaus, what part of his father's kingdom came to his share, i. 10, 148; styled *king* in the New Testament, *ethnarch* by Josephus; the consistency of this, i. 11; was generally hated, *ibid*.; banished by Augustus to Vienna in Gaul, 15, 160, 232; the duration of his government, 11, 160, 232
Archelaus, Bp in Mesopotamia, a work ascribed to him, ii. 136; the character of that work, *ibid*.; ascribed by some to Hegemonius, 137; the time of it, *ibid*.; its antiquity, 138; he speaks like an Unitarian, *ibid*.; his testimony to the scriptures, 138, 139; from that work ancient writers against the Manichees took their accounts, 141, 142; remarks upon it, 142 to 144
Aretas, successor of Obodas, king of Arabia, i. 151
Arethas, his commentary upon the Revelation, iii. 56
Aristides, an Athenian philosopher, and Christian apologist, i. 437
Aristides, a letter of Africanus to him, concerning the differences in the two genealogies of Matthew and Luke, i. 513, 516
Aristides (*Ælius*) the sophist, his time and works, iii. 156, 157; select passages from him, 157; passages concerning the Christians, and illustrating the books of the New Testament, 157 to 159; his character, 159, 160
Aristion, an elder, near the times of the apostles, i. 337, 338
Aristo, of Pella in Palestine, i. 438
Aristobulus, a Jewish writer, mentioned by Anatolius, and said to be one of the seventy translators of the Old Testament, ii. 78
Arianism, compared to heathenism, i. 626; said to be the worst of all Heresies, ii. 399; its time and rise, 303; great increase, 304, 305; the occasion of the controversy, 306; countenanced by some Antenicene writers of the church, 372; the Arian scheme of doctrine, v. 313 to 315; objections against it, 315 to 317
Arians, persecute the Novatians, ii. 54; many of them disciples of Lucian, presbyter of Antioch, 115; divisions among them, 308; their numerous synods and creeds,

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ibid.; their want of moderation, 308, 309; said to be great persecutors, 399; the cruelty of a persecution raised by them, iii. 27; not allowed to be Christians by Athanasius, ii. 399; their writers, 311 to 321; free remarks upon their conduct in the time of Constantius, iv. 374

Arius, his letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia quoted, ii. 115; makes mention of the Manichees, 148; his history, 303, 305; his works, 305, 306; his character, 306; his opinions, 307; his and his follower's testimony to the scriptures, 309, 310; excommunicated by the council of Nice, and banished by Constantine, 350

Arnobius, his history, work, and time, iii. 244 to 247; his character, 247, 248; select passages from him, 248 to 252; his testimony to the scriptures, 253 to 255; a fine saying of his, 363

Arnobius, author of a commentary upon the Psalms, ii. 247, 255, 256

Arnold (*Godfrey*) his history of all Heresies, ii. 179

Arrian, who published the *Enchiridion*, and discourses of Epictetus, his time and character, iv. 47 to 49.

Artemon, or *Artemas*, and his followers; an anonymous author against them, i. 485; they received the scriptures, 486 to 488. iv. 658; charges against them as corrupters of the scriptures, weakened and confuted, i. 486 to 488; their sentiment the same as that of Paul of Samosata, 485, 625. Artemas, mentioned by Methodius, ii. 105; the time when he lived, iv. 659; believed Christ was a mere man, born of a virgin, 658

Ascension of Moses, an apocryphal book, how mentioned by Origen, i. 541, 557

Ascension of Isaiah, an apocryphal book, how mentioned by Jerom, ii. 562. See *Isaiah*

Asclepiades, Bp of Antioch after Serapion, i. 493

Asclepiodotus, or Asclepiades, reckoned among the followers of Artemon, i. 486, 487

Asiarchs, or chief men of Asia, who they were, i. 91

Asseman (*Jos.*) commended, ii. 480, 488, 490

Assessment, the nature of a Roman assessment, i. 142, 143; sometimes made in the territories of dependent princes, 149 to 151; there was an assessment made in Judea, at the time of our Saviour's birth, 140, 141, and 151 to 156; objections against that supposition considered, 156 to 160

Asterius Urbanus, author of a work against the Montanists, his history, i. 489, 490; his charity and moderation, 491; his testimony to the books of the New Testament, 490, 491

Asterius, an Arian author, his history and works, ii. 313; Marcellus of Ancyra wrote against him, 396

Asturius, a Roman senator, and a Christian, who buried in an honourable manner the body of Marinus, a martyr, in the time of Gallienus, iv. 199

Athanasian Creed, considered, v. 310, 311

Athanasius, Bp of Alexandria, his time, ii. 398; select passages from him, 399; his bitterness against the Arians, *ibid.*; condemns persecution, iv. 498, 499; his testimony to the scriptures, ii. 399; received all the books of the New Testament, which are commonly received now, and no other, 299 to 403; a bible sent by him to the emperor Constans, 402; the Synopsis of sacred scripture ascribed to him, not his, 403, 405; extracts out of it, for shewing the writer's testimony to the scriptures, 403 to 405; the truth of Athanasius's account of Meletius and his followers, disputed, ii. 129, 130; his catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, iii. 544; Julian's great enmity to him, iv. 343 to 345; quoted, v. 387 note [a], 408 note [c]

Athenagoras, an apologist for the Christian religion in the time of M. Antoninus, his history, works, and testimony to the scriptures, i. 377 to 381

Athenians, their character, i. 105, 106

Athenodorus, brother of Gregory, Bishop of Neocæsarea, i. 597, 601

Attalus, native of Pergamus, one of the martyrs at Lyons, i. 362. iv. 86, 88, 89; whether he was favoured with the gifts of the Spirit? 91

Audians, followers of Audius, of Mesopotamia, their history and sentiments, ii. 411, 412

Auditors, among the Manichees, an account of them, ii. 156 to 158; needed purification after death, 198; their misery, 236

Augustan Writers, six in number, an account of them, iv. 250, 251

Augustine, Bp of Hippo Regius in Africa, his character of the Sibylline oracles, i. 420, 455; how long he was with the Manichees, ii. 149; his zeal for Manichæism, 149, 150, 237; by what arguments he was misled, 185, 186; his writings against them, 145; particularly against Faustus, 152; asserted free-will against them, 147, 197; commended, 286; his fine passages, shewing the genuineness and authority of the scriptures of the New Testament, 224 to 226; his charity and moderation toward the Manichees, 236, 237; his time, 576; his character, and compared with Jerom, 576; what acquaintance he had with the Greek language, 577; his testimony to the scriptures, 578 to 597; his judicious observations upon the conduct of St. Peter and St. Paul towards Jews and Gentiles, and towards each other, iv. 231 to 233; and his good sense acknowledged, 234. See also v. 514, 517; his excellent observations upon idols and heathen deities, iv. 245, note [b]; select passages from him, ii. 596 to 599; a passage in him amended, 596; his quotations of the work called *The Philosophy of Oracles*, and remarks upon them, iv. 245 to 249; his account of the treatment given to heathen people by Christian magistrates, 403, 494; the occasion of writing his large work, *Of the City of God*, 482; quotations from him, v. 375, note [c], 377, 387, referred to, 394, 427; his account of the Heretics, Adamians, iv. 575; Cerdon, 587; Leucius, 625; the Montanists, 674

Augustus, his decree in favour of the Jews in Asia and Cyrene, i. 97, 98; several computations of his reign, 194; the nature of this title of Augustus, 198; his *jest* upon Herod for killing his sons, 183, 184

Aurelian, his treatment of Zenobia and Longinus, iv. 203; his time and character, 207; how the Christians were mentioned by him in a letter to the senate of Rome, 207, 208; his conduct towards Paul of Samosata, Bp of Antioch, i. 623. iv. 208; his persecution of the Christians, 208, 209

Authentic Letters, as used by Tertullian, explained, i. 425, 426

Autolicus, a learned heathen of the second century, i. 383, to whom Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, sent his *Apology for the Christian religion*, iv. 113

B

Babylas, Bp of Antioch, a martyr under Decius, iv. 192

Bacchanalia, prohibited by the Roman senate, i. 96

Bacchylus, Bp of Corinth, and writer in the second century, i. 445

Bagoas, an eunuch in the court of Herod the great, i. 152; bantered by Josephus, i. 153

Balduinus, (*Fr.*) his judicious observations upon Pliny's letter to Trajan concerning the Christians, iv. 20, 30; and upon Trajan's rescript, 30, note [e]; his remark upon the temper of Severus toward the Christians, 166; his observation concerning Papinian, 170, 171

Baluze (*Stephen*) quoted, ii. 326, 329

Baptism had its original from John, ii. 410; women not initiated among the Jews by baptism, v. 501, 502; Christian baptism, how misrepresented by Julian, 339, 340, by Zosimus, 402

Barcabbas, and *Barcoph* or *Pareor*, their prophecies were oriental books, and not forged by Basilides, iv. 556

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Bar-Cepha, Moses, his time, i. 515
Barchochebas, a Jewish impostor, who set himself up for the Messiah, in the time of Adrian, iii. 488, 555
Bardesanes, the Syrian, his age, and whether the same as the Babylonian, ii. 442 to 444; his history and works, 440 to 442; composed 150 Psalms, in imitation of David's Psalter, 442; believed the unity of God, iv. 520
Bar-Hebræus (*Gregory*) called *Abulpharagius*, his time, i. 507
Barnabas (*St.*) his history, and the character of the epistle ascribed to him, i. 283, 284; mentioned by Jerom, 284; ii. 560, 563; to whom that epistle was written, i. 284; when written, *ibid.*; not a part of canonical scripture though genuine, ii. 370, 374, 375. iii. 144 to 148; how quoted by Clement of Alexandria, i. 283. 406; by Origen, 283, 549; he was not an apostle, iii. 145 to 148; reckoned by Clement of Alexandria an apostolical man, or an apostle, in the lower sense of the word, i. 283, 406; not reckoned an apostle by Theodoret, iii. 13; said by Tertullian to be the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, i. 426
Baronius, his misrepresentation of Pliny, i. 137; thought Cyrenius was twice governor of Syria, 162
Barratier (*J. B.*) his judgment concerning the *Constitutions*, ii. 425; his observations upon some works of Theodoret, iii. 10.
Barsabas, surnamed Justus, Acts i. 23; a miracle wrought upon him, related by Papias, i. 337
Bar-Salibi (*Dionysius*) Bp of Amida in Mesopotamia; his time, i. 515
Bartholomew (*St.*) said to have preached the gospel in India, and to have left there St. Matthew's gospel, i. 390
Baruch, not received as a canonical book by Jerom, ii. 541, 542
Basil, Bp of Ancyra, an Arian, or Semi-Arian, his history and works, ii. 314
Basil, Bp of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, his time and works, ii. 465, 466; scriptures received by him, 406; marks of respect for them, 468; a passage of his relating to the inscription of the epistle to the Ephesians considered, 466 to 468; his honourable testimony to Gregory Thaumaturgus, i. 597; remarks upon it, 604
Basilides of Alexandria, next after Saturninus, his character, iii. 358; see the *Contents of his chapter*, iv. his time, and the account of his heresy, i. 437; iv. 584 to 586; confuted by Agrippa Castor, i. 437; an examination of several opinions attributed to him, iv. 586, 587; his opinion concerning Christ, 588, 589; his sentiments according to Beausobre, 540; his definition of faith, 545; he believed that the soul only would be saved, 541; he is said to have written a gospel, i. 438, 552. ii. 562, iv. 555; probably this is his 24 books of commentaries, iv. 555; falsely accused of believing the indifference of actions, and of using magic, 542 to 544; the scriptures received by him, 554 to 555; his followers are said to have used spurious books, i. 559; the Basilidians resembled the Valentinians in many respects, iv. 544; these accounts prove that the knowledge of the scriptures was much diffused in the world, 556
Basnage (*S.*) his solution concerning the different names of Herodias's first husband, rejected, i. 213; quoted, with a remark concerning him, ii. 130; his remarks upon the prodigies preceding the destruction of Jesusalem, as related by Josephus, iii. 520; his judicious observations upon the accounts of M. Antoninus's deliverance in Germany, iv. 98
Bassianus, put to death by Constantine, ii. 340
Batricides, his peculiar opinion concerning Simon the just, i. 225
Bayle, his remarks upon Phlegon, iv. 63; his observation upon the agreement of Pagan and Christian persecutions, 253; upon the miracles ascribed to Apuleius, 266; a quotation from his article *Cainites*, 521
Beausobre (*J. de*) his opinion of the author of the *Testaments of the twelve patriarchs*, i. 457; quoted and commended, i. 581, 584, 619. ii. 104, 349, 392, 450, 490, 519; his vindication of the Manichees from some aspersions cast upon them, ii. 158, 159; his observations upon the Manichæan notion of the design of Christ's coming, 204, 205; his account of the Ebionites, and Nazarene Christians, 235, note [d]; his history of the Manichees, and his freedom of thinking commended, 234, and note [*], 240 to 242; his sentiment concerning the epistle to the Hebrews, 391, 392; his characters of Diodorus of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, 519; quoted, iii. 152. 206, 332, 352, and elsewhere; his observations on the Marcionite notion of Christ's delivering the wicked in hell, but leaving the good, iv. 600, 601; quoted, 519, 536, 537, 538, 540, 542, 591, 592, 640; v. 376, 427, and in many other places
Beausobre and Lenfant, quoted, ii. 63, 69. v. 408
Bede (*Venerable*) his time and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 78, 79
Bemarchius, his history of Constantine, which was favourable to him, iv. 310
Bengelius (*J. A.*) quoted, iii. 30, 34
Benson (*Dr. G.*) quoted, i. 270, 572. ii. 287 note [l], 407 note [k]. iii. 252, 286, 293, 377 note [e], 429, 430, 431, 445, 446, 469. v. 417, and elsewhere
Bentley (*Dr. R.*) quoted, i. 476, 624. ii. 596. iii. 68; his remarks upon Julian's ridicule of Christian baptism, iv. 340; his remarks upon Zosimus, 415
Bernice, her descent, i. 16, 18; envied her sister Drusilla, 17; her character, 18; respected by Titus, *ibid.*; interceded with her brother Agrippa, in behalf of Justus Tiberias, i. 40; kept a vow at Jerusalem, 115; first married to her uncle Herod, king of Chalcis, afterwards to Polemon, 16, 213, note [c]
Beryllus, Bp of Bostra, i. 495; his history and time, 524
Beza (*Theodore*) his solution concerning Cyrenius's enrolment, i. 171; his judgment concerning the *Revelation*, 646; quoted v. 377, 390, 534, 539
Bible, the origin of that word, iii. 137
Biblias, one of the martyrs at Lyons, iv. 87
Birth, natural, how the Manichees speak of it, ii. 194, 196
Biscoe, R. quoted, i. 262. iii. 259, 277, 279
Bishops, charged with pride by Jerom, iii. 572; their office easy when slightly performed; but difficult if well performed, 599. See also *Christian clergy*
Bishops and elders, at first all one, iii. 32
Blackwall (*A.*) quoted, i. 646, 647
Blandina, maid-servant, and martyr at Lyons, i. 361; her grievous sufferings, and wonderful patience under them, iii. 86 to 89
Blastus, a Valentinian, to whom Irenæus wrote a letter, i. 363
Blondel (*D.*) his confutation of the opinion of Grotius concerning the time of the *Revelation*, and St. John's banishment in Patmos, iii. 222; quoted, 534, 544
Blood forbidden to be eaten, in Gen. ix. 4. v. 495
Boanerges, on what account our Lord gave that surname to St. John, and his brother James, iii. 213, 214
Bonosus, bishop, and follower of Photinus, iii. 447
Bower (*A.*) remarks upon his account of the Manichees, ii. 240 to 243; his history of the popes quoted, 447 note [s]. iii. 16, 19, 20
Brekel quoted, iv. 532
Britain, Christians there in the time of Eusebius of Cæsarea, ii. 365; of Chrysostom, 614; of Theodoret, iii. 15; and of Gregory, bishop of Rome, 73
Bruttius Præsens, his time, and his testimony to Domitian's persecution, iv. 56 to 58
Buddas, a disciple of Mani, said to have taken that name instead of Terebinthus, ii. 141; no bad design therein, iii. 171; the same as *Addas*, *ibid.*; the common accounts of him not to be relied upon, *ibid.*
Buddeus, J. Fr. quoted, ii. 546
Burial allowed to malefactors in Judea, i. 89

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Burnet (*Bishop*) an observation of his, concerning persecutors, ii. 345
Burning the scriptures, and *concerning traitors*, in Diocletian's persecution, ii. 293, 294
Byrrhus, captain of the guard to Nero, i. 128

C

Cæcilian, Bp of Carthage, charges against him by the Donatists, ii. 295, 296; was present at the council of Nice, 349
Cæsarea in Palestine, its inhabitants, i. 10, 101; a library erected there by Pamphilus, ii. 116, 120; it was repaired by *Euzoius*, Bp of that city, 120; made use of by Jerom, *ibid.* and Eusebius, 363; and Euthalius, iii. 38; destroyed before the middle of the seventh century, ii. 121
Caians, or Cainites, supposed a part of the Sethians, iv. 653; the accounts of them from Epiphanius and Irenæus, incredible, 652, 653; no sect ever called themselves by that name, or professed such principles, 654
Caiaphas, high priest when our Saviour was crucified, i. 79; called Joseph by Josephus, 216
Caius, adopted son of Augustus, his journey through Judea, i. 157
Caius or Gaius, to whom St. John wrote his third epistle, iii. 432
Caius, his history and time, i. 481; said to have been a disciple of Irenæus, *ibid.*; did not receive the epistle to the Hebrews, as Paul's, *ibid*, 482, 484; did not receive the *Revelation*, 484, 485, 637; not certain that he was a Presbyter of Rome, 482, 483; the Dialogue with Proculus a Montanist, the only piece rightly ascribed to him, 482, 484; what he writes of the martyrdoms of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome, 482; how he reckons St. Paul's epistles, 482 to 484; the reason why he did not receive the epistle to the Hebrews, considered, 483, 484
Calama, in Numidia, a disturbance there in the year 408, occasioned by Gentile worship, iv. 478, 479
Caligula, his attempt to set up his statue at Jerusalem, i. 54; favoured Herod Agrippa, 128
Calvin (*J.*) quoted, v. 390, 424
Calumnies upon the Primitive Christians, what they were, and how they may be accounted for, i. 378, 452. iii. 486 to 488; the notice taken of them by Arnobius, ii. 251, 252; and by Lactantius, 268
Cambridge manuscript, character of the, ii. 17; the same with Stephens's second MS. 19
Camerarius. (*Joach.*) his judgment concerning *The Revelation*, i. 646
Canon, several senses of the word, iii. 138; that word, and *Canonical*, much used, denoting books of the highest authority, 138, 139
Canon of the O. T. the Jewish canon, received by Melito, i. 359; by Jerom, ii. 542, 579; by Rufinus, 578, 579; Augustine, 578 to 581; Chrysostom, 600, 601; Theodoret, iii. 10; Cosmas of Alexandria, 51; Gregory, Bp of Rome, 69; Leontius, 77; generally regarded by Christians, 48 to 50
Canon of the scriptures of the N. T. general observations upon it, iii. 142 to 144; how it has been formed, 148 to 150; not settled by any authority universally acknowledged among Christians in the time of Eusebius of Cæsarea, ii. 371; nor in the time of Augustine, 578; nor in the time of Cosmas of Alexandria, iii. 54; nor in the time of Cassiodorius, 61. See likewise 5, 17; nevertheless there was a general agreement among Christians upon this head, 61; nor were there any books received as sacred by Christians in former times, beside those now generally received by us, *ibid.* and 48, 49. 54, 77, 91
Authors, who had the same canon of the New Testament, with that which is generally received in our times; Athanasius, ii. 400, 403. Cyril of Jerusalem, excepting that he has not the Revelation, 409, 410. In like manner the council of Laodicea, 415. Epiphanius has the same as ours, 417; so likewise Basil, 465, 466; Gregory Nazianzen, 470, 471; Amphilochius, 473; Gregory Nyssen, 474, 475; Jerom, 548, 561; Rufinus, 573; the third council of Carthage, 574, 575; Augustine, 578 to 579; Innocent I. bishop of Rome, 628; Isidore of Pelusium, iii. 7; Cyril of Alexandria, 9; Cassian, 17; Prosper of Aquitain, 21; Eucherius, Bp of Lyons, 29, 30; Sedulius, 34; Leo, Bp of Rome, 34, 35; Salvian, 36; Dionysius, called the Areopagite, 41; Gelasius, Bp of Rome, 42; Andrew, 43, 44; Facundus, 55, 56; Arethas, 57; Cassiodorius, 61, 62; the author of the *Imperfect Work*, 66; Photius, 82; Oecumenius, 84, 85; Nicephorus Callisti, 90 to 92; Theophylact, excepting the Revelation, 87, 88
Canterbury (*The Archbishop of*) his sermon quoted with respect, iv. 398
Canticles (*The book of*) quoted by Ephrem, ii. 481; Pacian, 491; Ambrose of Milan, 493; Commentaries upon it by Rheticius, 441, and by Triphyllus, 442; received by Paulinus, 629; Theodoret, iii. 9, 10; Arethas, 57; the author of the *Imperfect Work*, 64; Gregory, Bp of Rome, 69; is in the catalogue of Dionysius called the Areopagite, 41; in the Alexandrian MS. 45. See *Solomon*
Capernaum, called our Lord's own city, and why, ii. 612
Capito, collector of the Roman tribute in Judea, i. 50, note [a]
Capitolinus (*Jul.*) his account of M. Antoninus's deliverance in Germany, iv. 102
Captain of the temple, a Jewish officer, i. 26, 58, 59
Captain of the guard, at Rome, prisoners sent to him from the provinces, i. 129; sometimes there were two, 130
Carabas, a distracted fellow at Alexandria, i. 88
Caracalla, a story told of him, when young, by Spartian, iv. 166; had a Christian nurse, *ibid.*; the Christians had an advantage by his act of indemnity, 168
Carpocrates, an account of him from ancient authors, iv. 556, 557; his time, 557; he and his followers believed that the world was made by angels, 558; that Jesus Christ was born of Joseph and Mary, *ibid.*; accusations against them, 559, 560, 561; the improbability of these accusations, 562; a general view of what they believed, 560; what scriptures they received, 563
Carter, Mrs. Elix. her translation of Epictetus quoted and commended, iv. 46, 47, 49, 50
Carthage, The third Council of, its time, and the scriptures received by the bishops there assembled, ii. 574, 575
Casaubon (*J.*) a remark of his upon a passage in Ignatius, i. 323; his observations upon Lampridius quoted and commended, iv. 55
Casley (*D.*) his remarks upon a passage in Augustine, ii. 595; quoted, iii. 45
Cassian (*John*) his country, works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 16 to 18; reckoned an opposer of the Augustinian doctrine, 18; how he treats Nestorius, and others called heretics, *ibid.*
Cassianus (*Julius*) or Cassian, an heretical writer of the second century, mentioned by Clement of Alexandria, i. 408; one of the Docetæ, who argued from the Old as well as the New Testament, iv. 681; his opinions and country, 682
Cassiodorius, (*M. A.*) *Senator*, his time and works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 59 to 62; a Latin translation of the *Adumbrations* of Clement of Alexandria, made by his order, i. 399, 404
Castle, at Jerusalem, see *Antonia*
CATALOGUES *of the books of the Old Testament*; Melito's, i. 359; Jerom's, ii. 539, 540; three such catalogues taken notice of by Eusebius, 393; such catalogues of several recited, namely, from the book of Ecclesiasticus, Philo, the New Testament, Josephus, Melito, Origen, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, 543 to 545
CATALOGUES *of the books of the Old and New Testament* in Origen, i. 532 to 542; Athanasius, ii. 400; in the *Synopsis*

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ascribed to him, 403, 404; in Cyril of Jerusalem, 409; in the canons of the council of Laodicea, 414; in Epiphanius, 416 to 419; in the 85th canon, called apostolical, 440; in Gregory Nazianzen, 470; in Amphilochius, 473; in Ebedjesu, 488; in Philaster, 522; in Jerom, 548, 549; Rufinus, 573; the third council of Carthage, 574, 575; Augustine, 578, 579; Chrysostom, 601, 602; Innocent, Bp of Rome, 628; Gelasius, Bp of Rome, iii. 42; Dionysius, called the Areopagite, 41; the Alexandrian MS. 44, 45; Nicephorus, patriarch of Constantinople, 47, 48; the Stichometry of Cotelerius, 49; Cassiodorius, 59, 60; Isidore of Seville, 73 to 75; Leontius, 76, 77; J. Damascenus, 79, 80

CATALOGUES *of the books of the New Testament*, see several in Origen, i. 532, 533; recited in divers passages of Eusebius of Cæsarea, ii. 368 to 371, who makes several sorts or classes of books—universally received—generally received—controverted—received by a few: sometimes called by him spurious—lastly, such as were universally rejected by catholic Christians, as contrary to the apostolical doctrine, 371 to 375; the catalogue of Nicephorus Callisti, 429, 430. *And see the preceding article.*

Catholic epistles, received by the Manichees, ii. 216, and the Paulicians, 239; seldom quoted by Chrysostom, Theodoret, and other writers of the fourth and fifth centuries, who lived in the East, 438, 439; freely quoted by Cyril of Alexandria, iii. 11, 12

CATHOLIC EPISTLES (SEVEN;) the antiquity and reason of that denomination, iii. 366; called also canonical, *ibid.*; by whom received in several ages, 367; well known and received by many in the time of Eusebius, ii. 369, 373, 374; received by Athanasius, 400, 401; by the author of the Synopsis of sacred scripture, 404; Cyril of Jerusalem, 410; Epiphanius, 417 to 419; *Seven* in the catalogue of Gregory Nazianzen, 470, and of Amphilochius, 473; *Three* only received by the Syrians, 488, 489; and by Chrysostom, 602, 607, 608; Severian, bishop of Gabala, 620; Theodoret, iii. 12; Cosmas, 51, 52, 53; *Seven* received by Jerom, ii. 548; Rufinus, 573; the third council of Carthage, 575; Augustine, 579, 587; their Order, iii. 367; in Jerom, ii. 548; Rufinus, 573; the third council of Carthage, 575; Augustine, 588; *Seven* generally received at Alexandria, and in Egypt, in the fifth century, iii. 39; and by many in the sixth century, 53; *Seven* received by Innocent, bishop of Rome, ii. 628; Palladius, iii. 5; Isidore of Pelusium, 7; Cyril of Alexandria, 9; Euthalius, who put out an edition of them, and divided them into chapters and sections, 38; the author of the Calling of the Gentiles, 22; and of the Divine Promises and Predictions, *ibid.*; Gelasius, Bp of Rome, 42; Andrew, 43; Gregory, Bp of Rome, 70, 71; Leontius, 77; the author of the *Imperfect Work*, 66; J. Damascenus, 80; Photius, 82; Theophylact, [probably,] 88; Oecumenius, who wrote a Commentary upon them, 84; Nicephorus Callisti, 91; their time and order, according to Bede, 78, 79; a Commentary upon them by Didymus, i. 404; ii. 478; by Cassiodorius, and their order in him, iii. 61, 62; in the Alexandrian MS. 45; in the Stichometry of Nicephorus, 48; and that from Cotelerius, 49; Five of them doubted of by some in the east, 59

Celer, the tribune, beheaded at Jerusalem, i. 104

Celestinus, Bp of Rome, how he persecuted the Novatians, ii. 57

Cellarius, (*Ch.*) his Observations upon the Christianity ascribed to the emperor Philip commended, iv. 189, 191

Celsus, a Christian writer, whether Bp of Iconium uncertain, i. 438

Celsus the Epicurean, quoted, i. 74; what he says of a Christian dialogue, 438; he called the Christians Sibyllists, 451; how he reviled the apostles, 549; his time and character, and work against the Christians, which work Origen answered in eight books, in which a large part of the work is still preserved, iv. 113, 114; his passages representing the Jewish expectation of the Messiah, 114, 115; passages containing references to the books of the New Testament, 115 to 120, 143, 145; his references to Christian facts, chiefly such as are recorded in the books of the New Testament, 121 to 130, 143, 144; passages concerning Christian principles, 130 to 134; concerning the progress of the Christian religion, 134 to 137; how he charges Christians with magical practices, 137; concerning the worship and assemblies of Christians, 137, 138; concerning those called Hereties, 138, 139; injurious reflections upon the Christians, 139 to 141; remarks upon the work of Celsus, and Origen's answer, i. 526, 545, 557, iv. 141, 142; a recapitulation of the extracts made from the work of Celsus, 142 to 144; a summary of the work of Celsus by Dr Doddridge, 145 to 147; by Dr. J. Leland, 147, 148; by Dr. Sherlock, 148, 149; see also 110, 111; and the word *Scriptures*, v. in this Index

Censors, at Rome, and in the provinces, their office and power, i. 143

Census; see *Assessment*

Cerdon, his time and opinions, iv. 585 to 587; an admirer of virginity, and is said to have recanted his errors, 587; what scriptures were received by him, 588

Ceres, her statue at Enna plundered by Verres, i. 95

Cerinthus, confuted in St. John's gospel, according to Irenæus, i. 367; whether St. John met him in a bath at Ephesus, 325, iv. 564; Caius is said to have written against him, 482; what Caius said of him, and that he forged a *Revelation*, 484; The Revelation ascribed to him, 634; but he was not the author, 638; his opinions, 638, 639; doubtful whether he was a Chiliast, 639; did not corrupt the Revelation, 641; an account of him from ancient authors, iv. 564 to 566; of his time and history, 566, 567; his sentiments, 567 to 569; zealous for the Mosaic law, 568; his morals vindicated, 569; what scriptures he received, 570, 571; did not reject the first or second chapter of St. Matthew, 570

Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria; his unsuccessful expedition into Judea, iii. 505 to 507

Chain; the Roman method of chaining prisoners, i. 127; Agrippa presented with a gold chain by Caligula, 128

Chalcidius, his time, work, and character, iv. 305; his testimony to the appearance of an extraordinary star at the time of our Saviour's nativity, 306

Chandler (*Dr.*) commended, iii. 61; his Letter concerning the paragraph in Josephus concerning Christ, with Dr. Lardner's answer, i. p. xlv and xlvi

Chapman, (*Dr. J.*) quoted, ii. 247; his argument for the continuance of miraculous powers in the church after the times of the apostles, iv. 159; his account of the stipends of the philosophers and sophists in the second century, 159, note [1]; quoted again, 160, 238, 255

Chapters; whether the books of the New Testament were divided into sections in the time of Tertullian, i. 433; an account of their being so divided afterwards by Euthalius, and another learned Christian, iii. 38

Chapters, (*the Three*) what they were, ii. 530

Chrestus, whether thereby Suetonius understood Christ, i. 735

CHRIST, or MESSIAH, the ground and reason of that character, v. 426, 427; how the word is used by some ancient Christian writers, i. 178, 179; early different opinions concerning his person, 235; the time of his ministry, 138; the ends of his death, according to Arnobius, 253; according to Lactantius, 271, 272; according to Augustine, 598, 599; his priestly office not insisted on by Lactantius, 277; Christ, the Son of man, a sermon, v. 192; the Son of God, a sermon, 197; his thirst upon the cross, a sermon, 157; his greatness in his last sufferings, a sermon, 161; divine testimonials given him during his last sufferings, a sermon, 175; made a curse for us, a sermon, 260; the power and efficacy of his doctrine, a ser-

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mon, 131; little children brought to him, a sermon, 95; his poverty our riches, a sermon, 202; his farewell wish of peace to his disciples, a sermon, 207; praying in his name, a sermon, 218; the woman anointing him, a sermon, 229; upon what grounds the Manichees believed in him, ii. 200; they believed him to be God, but not man, 200 to 203; they denied his nativity, 201, 202; and his real death, 203; did not reckon his death a sacrifice for sin, 204, 205. That Christ did not write the New Testament, 221; the Manichees had no Letter of Christ, 227; the opinions of other Heretics concerning Christ, iv. 511, 539, 540, 567, 568, 580, 600 to 605, 643, 644, 649

Christian, the origin of that name, ii. 531; the great honour of it, 612

Christian clergy, censured, by Sulpicius, ii. 622, 623; by Julian Pomerius, iii. 23; not called priests and Levites by the first Christians, ii. 430, 434

Christian doctrine, remarks upon some difficulties concerning it, i. p. xli to xliii

CHRISTIAN RELIGION; the nature and design of it, and its happy effects, ii. 248, 250, 267, 268, 363, 364; called the divine philosophy, 365; arguments for it, 249 to 251; objections against it, 251, 252; writers against it, 267, 282; how it prevailed against opposition, i. 532; its early progress in the East and the West, 614, note [h]; when planted in Persia, ii. 234; has withstood many difficulties, 236; its evidence not weakened by the Manichees, *ibid.*; its swift and wonderful progress in the world, and its truth asserted, ii. 250, 256, 292, 360, 365, 366, 487, 525, 572, 613, 614; iii. 7, 13 to 15, 55; and see *Arnobius* and *Lactantius*. Its great progress in the time of Pliny and Trajan, iv. 39, 40; of Adrian, 53, 54; of M. Antoninus, 81, 91, 92; of Celsus, 134 to 136; of Lucian, 152; of Domitian, attested by Dion Cassius, 184, 185; by Porphyry, 234, 297; and by all authors who wrote against the Christians, and by all edicts of persecuting emperors, 297, 298. The state of Christianity under heathen emperors, 298. Some evidences of the Christian religion are not weakened, but gain force by length of time, v. 46

CHRISTIANS: the origin of that denomination, iii. 266, 267; their moderation toward men of different sentiments, i. 531; their patience and fortitude under sufferings, 613; their kindness to each other, and to heathens in affliction, 612, ii. 6; their innocence, 268; their fortitude under sufferings, 272; did not persecute, 274, 275; not denominated from their bishops, nor from the apostles, but from Christ, 399, 420; the fortitude of the primitive Christians celebrated by Salvian, iii. 37; how treated by the unbelieving Jews, 487, 488; they left Jerusalem before the siege of that place began, 496, 507, 529; well known in the time of Pliny and Trajan, iv. 16; there were no Imperial edicts for persecuting them when Pliny went into his province, *ibid.*; they suffered under Heathen emperors, as Christians, for the name only, without any crimes proved against them, 17, 18, 29, 88, 93. See by all means note [c], p. 29; their innocence attested by Pliny and Trajan, 26, 29, 41; their sincere respect for the authority of civil magistrates, 25, 42; were numerous in the time of Pliny and Trajan, 26; their sufferings in times of persecution were very grievous, 92, 93; their fortitude and patience under them, 93, 94; they were steady in the profession of the truth, 40; their steadiness applauded, 28; their principles and worship, 40 to 42, 130 to 134, 137, 138; their innocence, and eminent virtue, 42, 93, 138; their early and principal adversaries who wrote against them, 110 to 112; falsely accused of worshipping Serapis, 548; vindicated from some charges as if they were too forward in exposing themselves to sufferings, 42, 76, 77; were sometimes ridiculed by heathen authors, 155; favoured in the time of Caracalla, 166, 168; their heavy sufferings after the publication of the edict of Severus against them, and also before it, 168 to 170; were numerous in the Roman empire before the conversion of Constantine, 302; their good character in the first three centuries, 303, 304; a testimony to their good manners in Julian, 345; great corruptions of manners among them afterwards, according to Salvian, iii. 37

Chromatius, Bp of Aquileia, his time and eminence, ii. 624; his works, and testimony to the scriptures, 625

Chronicles, the usefulness of those books, ii. 548

Chrysanthius, high-priest of Lydia, in the time of Julian, his moderation, iv. 383, 384; how he acted when sent for by Julian to come to court, 453

Chrysanthus, Novatian Bp at Constantinople, ii. 56

Chrysostom, (*John*) Bp of Constantinople; his time, ii. 600; a Synopsis of scripture ascribed to him, 601; his testimony to the New Testament, 602 to 608; books of the New Testament received by him, 608; marks of respect for the scriptures, 608 to 611; some texts interpreted, 611, 612; his observations concerning our Saviour, the apostles and evangelists, the Christian religion, &c. 612 to 619; he often argued against the Manichees, 148; what he says of Manichæan virgins, 160; his remark upon the History of Apollonius Tyanæus, iv. 269; his differences with the empress, as related by Zosimus, 410, 411; quoted, v. 387, note [a] 427; obscure through oratory, ii. 110, 111

Churches, St. Paul writes to seven churches, ii. 23, 24, 556; the apostolical churches mentioned in the New Testament, 585

Churches; how to be built according to the *Constitutions*, ii. 430; in the primitive times Christians had not spacious buildings to meet in, *ibid.* and see i. 548, 549

Cicero, heathen people offended at his works, ii. 253; whether Lactantius took pleasure in opposing him, 280; quoted, v. 420

Citizenship of Rome, bought with a great sum, i. 124, 125

Clark's (*S.*) Annotations on Phil. ii. 5 to 9, quoted and commended, v. 311

Clarke, (*Dr. S.*) how he quotes Phlegon, iv. 60; does not quote Thallus, 67; quoted, iii. 390; v. 324, 372, 373, 374, 375, 388, 389, 406, 431

Claudian, his time and works, iv. 388; his *testimony* to the victory of Theodosius over Eugenius, A. D. 394, pp. 389, to 392

Claudius restores to the Jews all their privileges, of which they had been deprived by Caligula, i. 28; permits the Jews to keep the high-priest's vestment, 100; banishes Cumanus, predecessor to Felix, and condemns Celer to be beheaded at Jerusalem, 104; banished the Jews from Rome, 135; a famine in his time, 131 to 134

Clayton, (*R.* late Bp of Clogher) quoted, v. 372, 423, 427, 428 to 431

Clement of Alexandria, his history, time, character, and works, i. 393, 394; his testimony to the books of the New Testament, 395 to 407; a difficult passage of his, relating to St. Mark's gospel, explained, 395 to 398; his *Adumbrations*, 392, 399; how he quotes apocryphal books, 407 to 412; commended by Alexander, Bp of Jerusalem, 493; his account of the Heretics, Basilidians, v. 537, 538, 542; Carpocrates and Epiphanes, 556, 557; Cassian, 681, 682; Prodicus, 571

Clement of Rome, not of Jewish extraction, iii. 99, note [a]; not a martyr, nor related to the Roman emperors, i. 293; his epistle to the Corinthians, and the time of writing it, 289 to 291; that epistle read in some churches on the Lord's day, 291, 292; Photius's character of it, 290, note [a]; his only genuine work, *ibid.*; the second epistle, ascribed to him, not his, 291 to 293; not author of the Constitutions, or Recognitions, or other books ascribed to him, 292, 466 to 468, 472; his epistle to the Corinthians is quoted by Irenæus, 374; by Clement of Alexandria, 406; by Origen, 549; was one of St. Paul's fellow-labourers, 550; acquainted with apostles, and apostolical men, ii. 92; his epistle, though genuine, not a part of the

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New Testament, 375, 386; though he wrote in Greek, he may be reckoned among Latins, iii. 330; his remarkable testimony to the martyrdoms of the apostles Peter and Paul, and other Christians at Rome, 409 to 411; quoted, v. 402

A DISSERTATION upon the two epistles ascribed to Clement of Rome, lately published by Mr. Wetstein, v. 432 to 446; not genuine, for they are not mentioned by the ancient writers who acknowledge his epistle to the Corinthians, 433 to 435; Jerom did not refer to these epistles, 435 to 437; but to the two former epistles, as Dr. Cave, Grabe, &c. understood him, 437; a passage cited also from Epiphanius may well refer to the former epistles, 437; other external arguments of Wetstein's refuted, 438, 439; no internal evidences, for scripture is not cited in the manner of Clement, 439, 440; they were written long after Clement's time (though before Gentilism was extinct in the Roman empire,) for the custom had commenced for some ecclesiastics to have what were called *subintroduced women*, 440 to 443; the writer's excessive praises of virginity do not resemble the scriptures nor Clement, 443, 444

The epistle to the Hebrews was received by this writer, and Christians had then a great regard for the sacred scriptures, 445

Clement, (*Flavius*) a relation of Domitian, and consul of Rome, put to death by that emperor, ii. 293; iii. 621 to 622; iv. 184, 185

Clementine Homilies, the work of an Ebionite, i. 472, 474; the same as the *Dialogues of Peter and Appion*, 472, 473

Clementine Epitome, an account of that work, i. 474, 475

Clerc, (*J. Le*) quoted, i. 165, 177, 195, 222, 294, 323; iii. 150, 250; v. 534, 536; asserts that the apostolical fathers do not quote apocryphal books, i. 324; other judicious observations of his upon the same fathers, 334; his opinion, but without sufficient reason, that Clement of Alexandria did not distinguish apocryphal books from others, 407, 408; a mistake of his concerning the number of the books of the New Testament quoted by Irenæus, 371, 372; his observations upon the treatment given to heathens by Constantine, and afterwards, i. 345; iv. 494; his opinion of the *Constitutions*, ii. 424, 425; his commendation of a work of Jerom, 565; his judgment concerning Augustine, 576, 577; his fine observations upon the evangelists, and that St. Mark is not an abridger of St. Matthew, 584; his judicious observations upon Pliny's letter concerning the Christians, and Trajan's rescript, iv. 16 to 20, 21, 31, 32; upon M. Antoninus's *Meditations*, 75, 76

Cælestis, the goddess, her temple at Carthage demolished, A.D. 399, iv. 477

Colonia, (*D.*) quoted, iii. 607; he acknowledges the superstition of Pliny, iv. 37; his judgment upon Phlegon, 64; upon Dionysius the Areopagite, 68; receives the *Philosophy of oracles* as a work of Porphyry, 238

Colonies, Roman, their nature, i. 43

Colosse, the church there planted by St. Paul, iii. 11, 362 to 366; the epistle to them when and where written, 322

Commentaries upon the four gospels, i. 384

Commodian, contemporary with Cyprian; his history, and character, and work, ii. 72; select passages from him, 72, 73; his testimony to the scriptures, 73

Conclusion of the second century, heathen sayings of the Christians, iv. 162; anecdotes concerning divers heathen governors, who persecuted the Christians, or were favourable to them, 162, 163; remarks concerning the number of heathen writers, who have mentioned the Christians, 163 to 165

Conformity to this world forbidden to Christians: two discourses, v. 14

Consideration, the Duty of, a sermon, v. 63

Constantine, the first Christian emperor, receives addresses from the Donatists, ii. 297; appoints a council at Rome, and afterwards another at Arles, to hear their cause, *ibid.* and decides it himself, 297, 298; his parentage, and the time and place of his birth, 321, 322; leaves Galerius, and goes to his father Constantius, 325; succeeds his father, *ibid.*; gives his sister Constantia in marriage to Licinius, 326; his death, and the duration of his reign, 327; his conversion to the Christian religion, *ibid.*; said to have seen a luminous cross in the heavens, 328; several opinions about it, 329; observations upon the account of it, 329 to 333; gives liberty to the Christians, 334; his edicts in their favour, *ibid.*; grants privileges to the Catholics and their ministers, 334, 335; churches built by him, 336; abolishes the punishment of the cross, 339; his character, *ibid.*; remarks upon his reign, 339 to 346; his testimony to the scriptures, 346, 347; convened the council of Nice, 348; his letter to Alexander and Arius commended, 355; said to have inquired after Heretics, ii. 162; his history written by Praxagoras and Bemarchius, both heathen authors, and favourable to him, iv. 309, 310; the account of his conversion in Zosimus, and the several blemishes of his reign, and reflections upon him, considered, 399 to 401; and see 370, 371; concerning his building Constantinople, 402 to 405; his edict for a general toleration rehearsed, 436

Constantine und Licinius, their edicts in favour of the Christians, iv. 288, 289 to 291; the conversion of Constantine a great advantage to the Christians, 294

Constantinople, consecrated by Constantine, ii. 346

Constantius, father of Constantine, his family, ii. 323; his character, 323, 324; moderated the persecution in his part of the empire, 324; his marriage with Claudia Theodora, daughter-in-law of Maximian Herculius, and his children by her, 323; his death, 325

Constitutions and canons, (*The apostolical*) Pearson's opinion of them, i. 500; how quoted by Epiphanius, iv. 421, 422; the judgment of moderns concerning them, 423, 425; drawn up in the name of the apostles, 425; not quoted by the writers of the first three centuries, 427; their manner of citing the books of the N. T. not suitable to the apostles, 429; have in them many things not suited to the times of the apostles, 430 to 435; things unworthy of the apostles, 435, 436; inconsistencies, 436; expressions betraying a late age, 437; are an imposture, *ibid*; the author's testimony to the scriptures, 438, 439; the eighty-fifth apostolical canon not ancient, 440; whether the constitutions are quoted by Irenæus, i. 375; quoted in the Imperfect Work, iii. 66; whether quoted by Damascenus, 80

Consubstantial, see *Homousian*.

Coponius, the first procurator in Judea, what power he had, and the time of his coming thither, i. 43, 48, 160, 177

Corinthians, the first epistle to the, when and where written, iii. 291

Corinthians (*The second epistle to the*) when and where written, iii. 296

Cornelius of Cæsarea, the time of his conversion, iii. 266, 402; that he was not a Jewish proselyte, 395, 397

Cornelius, Bp of Rome; his history and works, ii. 41, 42; extracts from a letter of his concerning Novatus, 43, 44; remarks upon it, 45, 47

Cosmas of Alexandria quoted, ii. 620; his time, and works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 50, 55

Cotelerius, J. B. a remark of his concerning the epistle of St. Barnabas, as cited by Clement of A. i. 406; his judgment upon the *Recognitions*, 465, 467; upon the *apostolical* constitutions and canons, ii. 423, 439

Council at Jerusalem, the time of it, iii. 271

Councils, how little regarded by some men, ii. 352; have no right to decide in matters of faith, *ibid.*

Councils of Antioch, relating to Paul of Samosata; their

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times, i. 622, 623; who present at them, 620, 621; the most famous councils in the first three centuries, 624; the number of bishops present, *ibid.*

Counsels of prudence, for the use of young people, a sermon, v. 3 to 13

Creation, how divided between the Father and the Son, according to some Christian writers, ii. 103, 104; the work of God alone, v. 379, 380, 388, 423 to 426; creation of Adam and Eve, 446 to 449

CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY, vols. i. and ii. throughout, and vol. iii. to p. 134

Credibility of the Evangelical History, and the truth of the Christian religion, i. 572; ii. 255, 290, 365, 367, 368; iii. 597, 598, 615, 616, 626, 627; iii. 88; internal marks of credibility in the New Testament, two sermons, v. 276.

Crellius mentioned, v. 388

Cresconius, a learned Donatist, ii. 298

Crevier, (Mr.) quoted, iii. 513, 521; iv. 178, 190; his character of Trajan, 37; his judgment upon a passage of Lampridius, 55; his character of Apuleius, 110

Crispus, eldest son of Constantine, put to death by his father, ii. 341, 342

Cross, malefactors carried their own cross, i. 88

Cross, on which Christ suffered, said to be found by Helena, ii. 336

Cudworth, (*R.*) his opinion concerning the importance of Apollonius Tyanæus, iv. 258, 259; that Philostratus wrote his life with a design to set him up as a corrival with our Saviour, this opinion examined, 261 to 265; a passage from him concerning the Valentinians, iv. 520

Cyprian, Bp. of Carthage, his history and time, ii. 1 to 9; his opinion of the baptism of Heretics, 6; his character, 8; called Tertullian his master, i. 417; testimonies to him, ii. 8, 9; understood Greek, 11; his works, 9; testimony to the scriptures, 12, 13; too much relied upon in the account of Novatus, 51; his confession and martyrdom in the time of Valerian, iv. 197 to 199

Cyprianus (Ernestus Solomon), his remark on Jerom, i. 435

Cyrenius, the account of his coming into Syria and Judea after the removal of Archelaus, i. 43, 119, 157, 158, 160; his true name, 162; his character and history, 172; divers solutions of the chief difficulty concerning the enrolment at our Saviour's nativity, 162, &c.; that enrolment made by Cyrenius, 171 to 175; ii. 392; objections against this considered, i. 175 to 179

Cyril, Bp of Alexandria, how he treated the Novatians, ii. 57; his time and works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 89; his answer to Julian's work against the Christians, iv. 322, 332

Cyril of Jesusalem, his time and works, ii. 409; his testimony to the scriptures, 409 to 411; his catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, 409; what he said when there was much discourse, in the time of Julian, about rebuilding the temple, iv. 325, 326

D

Dæmoniac, how Ignatius useth that word, and dæmon, i. 324

Remarks on Dr. Ward's dissertations concerning the demoniac who resided among the tombs, v. 475 to 480; Mr. Mole's observations on the subject, 475 to 477; physicians ascribed their disorders to natural causes, i. 570; Origen's opinion of them, *ibid.* Optatus thought that every man is born with an unclean spirit, 570, 571

The CASE of the DÆMONIACS mentioned in the New Testament, in four sermons on Mark v. 19, with an appendix, i. 235 to 272; by what means the herd was hurried down the precipice, 239, 240, 259, 260; for what reasons our Saviour did not suffer the dæmoniac to continue with him, 241; the distemper of the men was lunacy, or distraction, *ibid.*; the only miracle of the kind particularly recorded, *ibid.*; the opinion of the moderns concerning the dæmoniacs, 244, 245; the general opinion concerning them in the time of our Saviour, 245 250; the word *dæmons* should be used, and not *devils*, for throughout the New Testament there is but one evil spirit called *devil*, 245; meaning of the word dæmons, in ancient writers, and in the New Testament, 246; Josephus and many others supposed that they were the souls of wicked men, 247; in which sense the word is used in the Old and New Testament, *ibid.*; many believed that Providence permitted the souls of bad men, and fallen angels, to dwell in the region of the air, 247, 248; and that these evil spirits were in subjection to Satan, or the devil, as their head or prince, and were instruments of afflictions to men, 248 to 250; there were dæmoniacs likewise among the heathens about the same time, 250, *ibid.*; that those disorders were mere bodily indispositions appears from several considerations, 252 to 256; objections to this answered, 257 to 266; Mary Magdalene's case, 260; two passages from Josephus, with remarks, 266 to 268. Some texts of the New Testament explained, 268 to 271; that dæmons, or the souls of dead men, have power over the living, was believed universally among the heathens, and by many orthodox Christians, iv. 544, 638, note *

Daillé, (*J.*) his character of Tertullian, i. 418; his judgment concerning the *apostolical constitutions*, ii. 424; his treatise about them, 427; quoted again, 429, 432

Damascenus, (*J.*) his catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, ii. 546; his time and works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 79 to 81

Damascius, his time and works, iv. 422; extracts out of his works, in Photius, 423 to 425; in Suidas, 425 to 427

Damasus persecuted the Luciferians, ii. 450; his learning and writings, 464, 465; how he succeeded in the contention for the bishopric of Rome, 464; iv. 377

Damis, friend and companion of Apollonius Tyanæus, iv. 260, 268, 272

Daniel esteemed a prophet by Josephus, ii. 543; and by Jerom, though not by the Jews in his time, 541; the additional apocryphal part of his book rejected by Apollinarius and Eusebius, 456; and Jerom, ii. 541; that part not explained by Theodoret, iii. 10

Deaconesses, Christian, Pliny's account of them, and how they were, by his order, examined by torture, iv. 15, 25, 41

Deacons, their office, i. 280, 281

Decius, his time and character, iv. 191; accounts of his persecution from several, 192; a persecution at Alexandria before the publication of his edict against the Christians, *ibid.*; his persecution was general, 193

Decree (Apostolic) in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, considered, v. 494 to 519; it was directed to all Gentile converts, 498, 504; all the particulars of it in their own nature indifferent, 504, 505; therefore not obligatory on all men, at all times, 506; the several articles explained, 506 to 509; the word rendered *fornication* implies some alliances with heathens, of which Esau was guilty, Heb. xii. 16, 508

Delays in things of religion unreasonable, a sermon, v. 68

Delivering, the meaning of that word in divers places of the New Testament, i. 29, 40

Delphinus, Bp of Bourdeaux, ii. 500, 501

Demas, his character cleared up and vindicated, iii. 318

Demetrian, to whom Cyprian's Apology for the Christian religion was sent, iv. 123

Demetrius, Bp of Alexandria, appoints Origen master of the catechetical school there, i. 520, 521; afterwards is offended with him, and ill-treats him, 522, 523

Dexter, (*Fl.*) son of Pacian, and friend of Jerom, ii. 490, 491

Dictinius, a Priscillianist Bp and author, ii. 509, 510.

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Didymus of Alexandria, his work against the Manichees, ii. 147; commended, *ibid.* 148; and quoted elsewhere. His history and character, 477; his testimony to the scriptures, 477 to 479; published an exposition of the seven catholic epistles, i. 404, ii. 478

Digest, how that word is used concerning the books of scripture, iii. 140, 141

Dioclesian, an introduction to an account of his persecution, iv. 275; the civil state of the empire at that time, 276 to 277; general accounts of this persecution from several authors, 277; the date of it, and the several edicts published against the Christians at that time, ii. 324, iv. 278; the sufferings of the Christians, 279 to 281; the edict of Galerius in their favour in the year 311, p. 282, 283; how the persecution was still carried on by Maximin in the East, 285; how Constantine overcame Maxentius at Rome, A.D. 312, and he and Licinius in the same year published their first edict in favour of the Christians, 288; Maximin's letter to Sabinus in favour of the Christians in 312, p. 288, 289; the second edict of Constantine and Licinius in favour of the Christians, A.D. 313, p. 289, 290; Maximin is overcome by Licinius, and publishes a new edict in favour of the Christians, in 313, and dies, 291, 292; two inscriptions relating to Dioclesian's persecution, 293; observations upon this persecution, and Dioclesian's character, 293 to 295; an edict against the Manichees, said to be his, ii. 162; he resigns the empire, and lives retired, and dies, 324

Diodorus, Bp of Tarsus, his book against the Manichees, ii. 144; a mistake imputed to him, 150; his time and history, 517; his commentaries upon the scriptures, and his other works, 518; his great merit, 519; said to have embraced the doctrine of Paul of Samosata, *ibid.*

Diogenes; see *Laertius*.

Diognetus, the epistle to him not written by Justin Martyr, i. 343, 349, 350

Dion Cassius, his time and work, iv. 181; his testimony to the conquest of Judea by Titus, and to the destruction of Jerusalem, iii. 532; iv. 182, 183; his testimony to Domitian's persecution, 183 to 185; and to the progress of the Christian religion at that time, 184, 185; and in the time of Commodus, 186; and to Nerva's favourable regard to the Christians, 185; his account of the shower by which M. Antoninus and his army were saved in Germany, 100, 101, 186

Dion Chrysostom, his time, and testimony to the Christians, iv. 160

Dionysius the Areopagite, said to have been the first bishop of Athens, i. 352; the works falsely ascribed to him, when written, 631; his testimony to the darkness at the time of our Saviour's passion not much valued by learned men, iii. 67, 68

Dionysius, falsely called the Areopagite, the time of his works, and his catalogue of the books of the Old and New Testament, iii. 40, 41; see also i. 631

Dionysius, Bp of Alexandria, succeeded Heraclas, i. 523; his history, 609 to 611; had revelations, 611, 12; said to favour Arianism, 616 to 618; his writings, 629; his argument upon the *Revelation*, 634 to 636; remarks upon it, 637 to 647; his own opinion of that book, 647; his testimony to the scriptures summed up, 649, 650; his character, 631, 632

Dionysius, Bp of Corinth, his history, and testimony to the scriptures, i. 351 to 353

Dionysius, Bp of Rome, his history and works, ii. 69, 70; his kindness to the Christians at Cæsarea in Cappadocia under affliction, 69; appealed to in the controversy about Sabellianism, 70; several books and epistles addressed to him, *ibid.*; his character, 70, 71; his testimony to the scriptures, 71

Dioscurus, and his brothers, called tall, and other monks in Egypt, how treated by Theophilus, Bp of Alexandria, ii. 536, 537

Diotrephes was not an Heretic; wherein his fault consisted, iii. 432 to 434

A Divination of heathen people in the time of Valens, iv. 445 to 454

Divorces practised by the Jews, i. 22; both men and women, 213, note [c]

Docetæ, their opinion concerning the person of Christ, iv. 112; v. 375, 429; they all deny the resurrection of the body, or the flesh, iv. 628

Doctrine of the Apostles, how mentioned by Eusebius, ii. 370, 386, 387; by Athanasius, 400; and by the author of *The Synopsis of Sacred Scripture*, 405; not the same as the *Apostolical Constitutions* now extant, 387

Doddridge, (*Dr. Ph.*) quoted, ii. 158, 169, 206, 215, 252, 265, 281, 350, 369, 399; his observations upon the testimony of Josephus, iii. 530; his summary of the work of Celsus against the Christians, iv. 145, 147

Dodwell, (*H.*) his opinion of the age of Bardesanes examined, i. 443, 444; quoted, iii. 117, 245, 246, 248, 464, 465

Domitian, his inquiries after the posterity of David, i. 357; the cruelties of his reign, and the occasion of his death, iii. 617, 621, 622. See *Bruttius Præsens*. Dion's testimony to his persecution, iv. 184, 185

Domitilla (*Flavia*,) related to Flavius Clemens the consul, banished to the island Pontia, for the sake of Christianity, iv. 56, 184, 185

Domnus, Bp of Antioch after Paul of Samosata, i. 622, 625

Donatists, a brief history of them, ii. 296 to 298; their writers, 298 to 300; their testimony to the scripture, 301, 302

Donatus, a confessor, to whom Cæcilius dedicated his book of the Deaths of persecutors, iv. 283

Donatus, Bp of Carthage, ii. 295

Donatus, Bp of Casæ Nigræ in Numidia, ii. 295, 297

Donatus, the famous Latin grammarian, and Jerom's master, ii. 532; when he flourished and taught at Rome, iv. 495, 496

Doris, a signal piece of justice done there by Petronius, president of Syria, in the time of Claudius, with remarks upon it, i. 98 to 100

Dorotheus, presbyter at Antioch, ii. 86

Dorotheus, Dioclesian's chamberlain, and a martyr, ii. 87

Dorotheus, supposed author of the *Synopsis* of the lives of the prophets and apostles; remarks upon it, ii. 87, 88

Doxology, that at the end of the Lord's prayer taken notice of in the dialogue, *Philopatris*, iv. 155

Doxologies in the New Testament, and ancient Christian writers, v. 401, 402, and see 422

Drake (*Dr.*) his discourse upon the inscription of the altar to the unknown god, iv. 173

Drusilla, third daughter of Herod Agrippa, i. 16; contracted to Epiphanes, married to Azizus, afterwards to Felix, *ibid.* 213, note [c].

E

Easter, the different times of keeping it, i. 412, 413 to 445; when kept by the Audians, ii. 412; the determination of the council of Nice about it, 351; not kept by the Aëtians, 413; the controversy about the time of it in the second and third centuries, 428

Ebedjesu, his time, i. 514, ii. 487; his catalogue of the books of scripture, which is the same as the canon of the churches of Syria, 488; remarks upon it, 488 to 490

Ebionites, their opinion of Christ, i. 447, 457; in his opinion they were extremely mistaken, v. 387; two sorts of them, iii. 483; and see *Nazarenes*. The beginning of their gospel according to Epiphanius, i. 357; another passage of it

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from Epiphanius, 348; their gospel said to be corrupted, 357; rejected St. Paul and his writings, 472; Symmachus was of this sect, 447; what gospels they used, 474; the Clementine Homilies, and the Recognitions, composed by an Ebionite, *ibid.*

Ecclesiasticus, how quoted by Origen, i. 556; by Cyprian, ii. 30; not received as a canonical book by Jerom, 540; nor Rufinus, 573; nor Chrysostom, 601; see also 579. Quoted, as written by Solomon, 629; as written by a wise man, iii. 7. Not a book of authority, according to Cosmas, 51; nor according to Gregory, Bp. of Rome, 69

Edessen Chronicle, it's time, i. 442

Egyptian Impostor, his history, with remarks, i. 225 to 228

Egyptians; see *Gospel according to them.*

Egyptians, their character, iv. 54; their rites contemned by the Romans, i. 95; prohibited at Rome, 96

Elcesaites, mentioned by Origen, i. 524; iv. 682; by Epiphanius, under the names of Ossens and Ebionites, 683, 686; by Theodoret, 685; by Methodius, ii. 105; iv. 683; the time of their rise uncertain, 682; the name of their founder, 686; the modern opinions of the time they flourished, 687, 688; their duration, 688; what parts of scripture they received, 689; explanation of a prayer of Elxai, *ibid.*

Elect, among the Manichees, an account of them, ii. 156, 157, 198, 206 to 209

Eleutherus, Bp of Rome, i. 356

Elpidius, a rhetorician, and master of Priscillian, ii. 498 to 500, 503, 509

Embalming, used by the Jews, i. 90; the manner of their embalming dead bodies, and particularly that of our Saviour, v. 486

Emperor, that title given to colleagues in the Roman empire, i. 197

Encratites, a sect said to be founded by Tatian, and improved by Severus, i. 353, 355; see, concerning several such people, 588, 589

Enoch, his books, how quoted by Origen, i. 557; mentioned by Anatolius, ii. 78; an apocryphal book, supposed to be quoted by St. Jude, 561, 562

Ens (*J.*) quoted, iii. 465, 470

Epagathus, (*Vettius*) a martyr at Lyons, iv. 83

Ephesians commended by St. Paul, i. 316

EPHESIANS, the epistle so entitled, sent to them, according to Ignatius, i. 316; and Irenæus, 368; and Clement of A. 401; and Tertullian, 423; that it was written to the Ephesians, iii. 342 to 362; to the Laodiceans, according to Marcion, as is supposed, i. 423; called the epistle to the Ephesians, by Origen, 535; Cyprian, ii. 21; Victorinus, Bp. of Pettaw, 96; Faustus and Secundinus, Manichees, 215, 217, 233; Athanasius, 400; the Synopsis ascribed to him, 405; the council of Laodicea, 415; C. M. Victorinus, 454; Basil, 467; Amphilochius, 473; Gregory Nyssen, 475; Didymus of A. 478; Ebedjesu, 488, 489; Ambrose, Bp of Milan, 495; the author of the Commentary upon thirteen of St. Paul's epistles, 521; Theodore, of Mopsuestia, 527; Jerom, 557; Rufinus, 573; Augustine, 579, 585; Chrysostom, 607; Pelagius, 631; Palladius, iii. 5; Theodoret, 11; Prosper, 21; the author of the Calling of the Gentiles, 22; Euthalius, 39; Facundus, 56; and many other authors in the same volume; when and where written, 297 to 303; a general character of this epistle, 11; a passage of Basil relating to it considered, ii. 466 to 468

Ephrem the Syrian, his time and character, ii. 479; the editions of his works, and his testimony to the scriptures, 480 to 484; select passages from him, 485 to 487; that he wrote Commentaries upon Tatian's Harmony, i. 506, 507; what he says of Bardesanes, and the use which he made of his works, 442

Epictetus, his life and time, iv. 43 to 45; his patience, 46; was learned, 46, 47; was not always a slave, nor was always poor, but for a good part of his life was a freeman, and enjoyed a competence, 44, 46; passages in him concerning the Christians, with notes and observations, 48, 50; much commended by Celsus, 133; the price of his lamp, 44; see a fine maxim, comprehending the general design of his philosophy, 50; his affected silence concerning the Christians, 50 and 164

Epimenides, his time, and a remarkable story concerning him, taken from Laertius, iv. 172

Epiphanes, a Carpocratian, son of Carpocrates, iv. 557

Epiphanius (*Bp of Salamis in Cyprus*) his time and works, and character, ii. 416; his testimony to the scriptures, 416 to 420; his quotations of a work called *Constitutions*, 421, 422; his catalogues of the books of the O. T. 545; quoted, v. 394; his account of the Heretics, Adamians, iv. 575; Alogians, 690, 691; Apelles, 642, 644, 647; Cainites, 652, 653, 654; Carpocratians, 557, &c.; Cerdon, 586; Cerinthus, 565, &c.; Elcesaites, 683, 685, 689; Heracleon, 584; Leucius, 625, 633; *Marcionites*, 590, 600; Montanists, 672; Ophians, 655; Sethians, 648; Theodotus, 659 to 661

Epiphanius, a heathen sophist at Laodicea, master of Apollinarius, ii. 455

Epistle of the church of Smyrna, containing an account of Polycarp's martyrdom, i. 333, 334

Epistle of the churches of Vienne and Lyons, i. 360, 362

Epponnina, wife of Sabinus, her excellent character, iii. 513

Erasmus, his characters of Jerom and Augustine, ii. 576

Ergenk and *Estenk*, a work of Mani, ii. 166

Eros, Bp of Antioch, i. 383

Essenes, their principles, and why not mentioned by the evangelists, i. 70, 71

Esther received as a canonical book, by Jerom, ii. 540, 542, 548; by Rufinus, 573; the third council of Carthage, 574; Augustine, 578

Evangelists, their candour, i. 181; the time when they wrote, iii. 151, 152; whether any of the first three evangelists had seen the gospel of the other before he wrote, ii. 584; iii. 245 to 250; they knew *how* and what to write better than Plato, i. 544; are credible witnesses, 573; their several accounts of the time of our Saviour's crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and appearances reconciled, v. 482 to 486, 522 to 543; their symbols according to Jerom, ii. 550; according to Augustine, 583; see also iii. 43, 69, 86; two of them apostles, two other disciples or companions of apostles, 583, 602; St. Mark and St. Luke wrote at a time when their gospels might be approved by apostles, 585; their order, according to Augustine, the same as ours, 583; and Chrysostom, 603; their order in Cosma of Alexandria, iii. 51, 52; and Theophylact, 86; commended, ii. 626, 627; iii. 88

Evangelists, in the reign of Trajan, i. 335, 336; and afterwards, in the time of Commodus, 390

Eucharist, the design of it, and the words of the institution explained, i. 511

Eucherius, Bp of Lyons, his time, works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 29, 30

Euchrocia, wife of Elpidius, the rhetorician, ii. 500; put to death with other followers of Priscillian, 501; her death and character from Pacatus, 503, 508

Eugenius set up for emperor by Arbogastes; his history, and character, iv. 389

Eunapius, his time and works, iv. 380; extracts, from his history of the Roman emperors, 381; from his lives of the sophists, 381 to 387; observations on those extracts, 388

Eunomius, an Arian, his time and works, and character, ii. 314, 315; said to have been shy of disputing with Sisinnius, a Novatian Bishop, 56; opposed the extreme

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veneration which was then begun to be shewn to the reliques of martyrs, iii. 116
Evocatus, an officer under Domition, i. 356
Euodius, præfect under the usurper Maximus, and judge in the cause of the Priscillianists, ii. 501, 506
Euphrates, a philosopher, who had some differences with Apollonius of Tyana, iv. 261
Eusebius, Bp of Cæsarea, his history and time, ii. 355, 356; vindicated from a charge brought against him, i. 617; iii. 356; his works, 356, 361; a character of his Ecclesiastical history, 359, 361; how he treated Marcellus, 359; remarks upon his works, 361; whether he was an Arian, 362; his character, 362, 363; select passages from him, 363 to 368; his passages concerning the books of the N. T. received in his own and former times, with remarks, 368, 369 to 380; books of the N. T. received by him, 380, 385; whether he received the epistle to the Hebrews, 381, 382; and the Revelation, 384, 385; the sum of his testimony, and that he did not make use of Christian apocryphal books, ii. 394, 395; censured, i. 179, 483, 488; too easily imposed upon, when he received the *Philosophy of Oracles*, iv. 245, 249; his subscribing the Nicene creed considered, ii. 353, 362; his passage concerning the Manichees, 139, 140; seldom mentions them, 140; his observations upon the testimony of Josephus, iii. 531; the paragraph in Josephus concerning our Saviour first quoted by him, 537, 542; how he quotes Plutarch, 607; his answer to Hierocles against the Christians, iv. 255 to 257; mentions the time of the heresy of the Elcesaites, 682; quoted, v. 427; his Commentary upon the Psalms translated into Latin by Eusebius of Vercelli, ii. 448
Eusebius, a learned Novatian, ii. 56
Eusebius, Bp of Emesa; his time and works, and character, ii. 315, 316
Eusebius, Bp of Laodicea, in Syria, i. 613; his history, ii. 79; formerly deacon at Alexandria, and much commended, i. 613
Eusebius, Bp of Nicomedia, his time and character, ii. 316, 317
Eusebius, Bp of Vercelli, his history and works, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 447, 448
Eustathius, Bp of Antioch, his history, and how deposed, ii. 397; said to have been a Sabellian, 398
Eustathius, an Arian, Bp of Sebaste, in Armenia, ii. 414
Eusthalius, Bp of Sulca in Ægypt, his time, iii. 38; his editions of the Acts, St. Paul's epistles, and the Catholic epistles, ii. 123, 405; iii. 38 to 40
Eutherius, Bp of Tyana in Cappadocia, a friend of Nestorius, iii. 19; his argument against following the multitude, 19, 20; against those who discouraged reading the scriptures, 20
Euthymius, his time, and works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 89, 90
Eutychian, a Novatian, said to have worked miracles, ii. 55
Euzoïus, Bp of Cæsarea, his history, ii. 317; his care of the library there, 120
Execution (*An*) made by Herod at Jerusalem, i. 152, 190, 191; remarks upon it, 154, 155, 181, 190, 191; See likewise, 74
Ezra, his care in publishing an exact edition of the O. T. which he is said by some to have restored, iii. 10, 78

F

Fabatus, procurator of Augustus in Arabia and Judea, i. 149; called Cæsar's servant, 159
Faber (*Tanaquil*) commended, i. 174; quoted, iii. 534, 542
Fabian, Bp of Rome, his history, and martyrdom in the time of Decius, ii. 41; iv. 192
Fabius, Bp of Antioch, favoured the Novatians, ii. 52
Fabricius, (*J. A.*) his opinion of the time of Athenagoras, i. 378; his judgment upon the collection of the Sibylline oracles, 450; upon the value and usefulness of the works of Josephus, 46; quoted and commended, 491, 239; his argument for the real character of Ammonius, iv. 239; receives *The Philosophy of Oracles* as written by Porphyry, 538
Facundus, an African Bishop, his time, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 55, 56
Faith, the good exercise of, a sermon, v. 126
Faith and hope, defined by Basilides, iv. 545
Famine in Judea, and the time of it, i. 131 to 134; remarks upon it, 134
Famine at the siege of Jerusalem, the distresses of it described, iii. 515, 518, 565, 566, 567
Fausta, daughter of Maximian Herculeus, married to Constantine, ii. 326; put to death, 340, 342
Faustinus and Marcellinus, followers of Lucifer of Cagliari, iii. 450, 451
Faustus, deacon of Alexandria, died a martyr, when of a great age, in Dioclesian's persecution, i. 613
Faustus, a Manichæan Bp, his history, ii. 152, 153; was banished into an island, 153, 161; a fine passage of his concerning the worship of God, 205; his passages concerning the interpolation of the books of the N. T. 220, 221; remarks upon them, 222, 224; quoted, 203, 242
Fearing always, The benefit of, a sermon, v. 152
Felicitas, a martyr, i. 578
Felix, governor of Judea, i. 16, 17; his marriage with Drusilla, *ibid.* 213, note [c]; was guilty of unjust actions, 17; hires Dora to kill Jonathan the high-priest, 17, 78; he hoped to receive money of St. Paul, 17; his good conduct towards the Jews and Greeks at Cæsarea, 101, 102
Felix, a Manichee; Augustine's dispute with him, ii. 161; a remarkable passage from him, 184
Festus, (*Porcius*) governor of Judea, i. 16; died there, 45; his council, 59
Festus (*Rufus*) proconsul of Asia in the time of Valens, and author of a Breviary of the Roman History, iv. 450, 451
Feuardentius, his edition of Irenæus, i. 327
Firmilian, Bp of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, his friendship for Origen, i. 523; his history, 575; his character, 576; his testimony to the scriptures, 576, 577; whether he received the second epistle of St. Peter, 577; and ii. 25; his eminence, and his moderation in the affair of Paul of Samosata, i. 620
Firmilian, the Roman president in Palestine; his cruelty to the Christians, ii 119, and note [k]
Flaccus, president of Asia, forbids the Jews to send money to Jerusalem, 196
Flaccus, president of Egypt, subject to the Egyptians, and unjust to the Jews, i. 46, 51, 52
Flacius Illyricus, his judgment concerning Eusebius and many other ancient Christian writers, ii. 278; concerning the Revelation, i. 649
Fleming, (*Mr. C.*) A letter to, on the Personality of the Spirit, v. 473, 474
Florinus, a Valentinian, to whom Irenæus wrote a letter, i. 325, 363
Fornication, its signification in the apostolic decree, Acts xv. v. 508, 509
Fortunatianus, Bishop of Aquileia, his Commentary upon the Gospels, and his character, ii. 443
Fortunatus, a Manichæan presbyter, Augustine's dispute with him, ii. 158; he vindicates the manners of his sect, 158, 159; quoted again, 177, 186, 192, 193, 198, 204
Fravitta, or *Frajutus*, a barbarian, and a Gentile, and yet a great general, and faithful to the Romans, iv. 40
Free inquiry in things of religion recommended, i. 612, ii. 253
Free will, asserted by Commodian, ii. 72; whether held by the Manichees, 197; how maintained by Augustine

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and other ancient Christians, 147, 197; see also 236; asserted by Arnobius, 253; by Lactantius, 267; by Eusebius, 365; by Gregory Nazianzen, 472; Gregory Nyssen, 477; Ephrem the Syrian, 487; Gaudentius, 524; Chrysostom, 618; Victor of Antioch, 628; Isidore of Pelusium, iii. 6

Fronto, an early writer against the Christians, iv. 112

Fundanus, (*Minucius*) proconsul of Asia, to whom Adrian sent a rescript, favourable to the Christians, iv. 52

Future State proveable by reason, a sermon, v. 111; see also, ii. 269, 270

G

Gagnier, (*J.*) quoted, iii 561, 562, 563, 564, 571, 572, 573

Gainas, the Goth, an account of him, iv. 409

Galatians, [*The epistle to the*] when and where written, iii. 287 to 291

Galen, his time, iv. 161; his passages concerning Moses, and Christ and his followers, *ibid.*

Galerius, (*Maximian*) his edict in favour of the Christians in 311, iv. 282, 283

Galilee, the native place of most of Christ's apostles, where also he wrought many miracles, iii. 13

Gallienus revokes Valerian's edict against the Christians, iv. 196, 197

Gallio, proconsul of Achaia, i. 19, 20; his behaviour towards St. Paul, 91; his character, 92; said by Chrysostom to have been a man of moderation and equity, ii. 611

Gallus, (*C. T.*) *successor of Decius*, his time, iv. 193; was a persecutor of the Christians, i. 610; iv. 193, 194

Gamaliel, the aged, the force of his reasoning in favour of the apostles, i. 161; his great eminence, and that he never embraced the Christian religion, iii. 550, 551

Gaudentius, Bp of Brescia, his time, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 523 to 525

Gaudentius, a Donatist Bp, ii. 299

Gelasius, Bp of Rome, his time, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 42

Gellius, (*A.*) how he quotes Epictetus, iv. 43, 45, 50

Geminus, or *Geminianus*, presbyter of Antioch, and author, i. 580

Genealogies in St. Matthew and St. Luke; both said to be Joseph's by the author of the *Quæstionis et Responsiones*, &c. i. 343; said to be left out of Tatian's harmony, 354; both in Ammonius's harmony, 512; reconciled by Africanus, 516, 517; both referred to by Clement of A. 394, 398, 400; both in the Manichæan and Catholic copies, ii. 233; received by Eusebius, 381; that in Matthew referred to by Irenæus, i. 366, 373; Tertullian, 419, 420; Victorinus, ii. 95; Cerinthus, iv. 570; generally received by Christians in Porphyry's time, 227

Generidas, in high offices, a barbarian, and Gentile, yet faithful to the Romans, in the time of Honorius, iv. 413

Gennadius, presbyter of Marseilles, his works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 41

Gentilism, established by edicts in the time of Julian, iv. 319; the state of Gentilism under Christian emperors, iv. 491 to 502

George, a learned Arian, and Bp of Laodicea, ii. 317

George, the Arian Bp of Alexandria, murdered by the people there; an account of it in Ammianus, iv. 375, 376; Julian, upon that occasion, sent a letter of reproof to the Alexandrians, 343; and he desired that George's library should be procured for him, *ibid.*

Gerdes, (*Dr.*) quoted i. 272; v. 467

Germanus, a Bp who reflected upon Dionysius of A. i. 630

Germinius, an Arian, successor to Photius in the see of Sirmium, ii. 444

Gibson, (*Dr.*) Bp of London, quoted with respect, i. 638, 643

Glabrio, put to death by Domitian, doubtful whether he was a Christian, iv. 184

Gobar, (*Ste.*) his character of Hegesippus, i. 356, 358; says that Hippolytus and Irenæus did not receive the epistle to the Hebrews as Paul's, 369

Godliness, the great mystery of, a sermon, v. 248

Gospel, meaning of the word, iii. 141; that the *gospel of Christ* is the same as his preaching, or doctrine, ii. 233; the gospel was preached all over the Roman empire before the destruction of Jerusalem, iii. 497

Gospels referred to, by Clement of Rome, i. 293 to 295

GOSPELS, (FOUR), the time of writing them, especially the first three, ii. 529; iii. 151 to 157; received by Justin M. i. 343 to 345; the author of Quæstiones et R. 343; Tatian, 353, 354; Irenæus, 365 to 367; Theophilus, Bp of Antioch, 389; the author of a *harmony* of the gospels, ascribed to him, 384; Clement of Alexandria, 400; Tertullian, 419 to 422; called by him our Digesta, 432; four gospels likewise according to Origen, 530; Dionysius of Alexandria, 633, 649; Cyprian, ii. 12; the author of the Computation of Easter, 40; the author of the poem against the Marcionites, 93; Victorinus, Bp of Pettaw, 95; Methodius, 105; Peter, Bp of Alexandria, 129; they seem to be acknowledged by Archelaus, 138, 139; Serapion, Bp of Thmuis in Egypt, 146; Titus of Bostra, 147; Hierax, 155; received by the Manichees, 212, 213; and the Paulicians, 238, 239; Eusebius of Cæsarea, and universally acknowledged, 369; and see 360, 361; four gospels according to Athanasius, 400; and the Synopsis, 404; Adamantius, 406; Juvencus, 407; Julius Firmicus, 408; Cyril of Jerusalem, 409, 410; the council of Laodicea, 415; Epiphanius, 417, 418; the Apostolical constitutions, 438; Basil, 466; Gregory Nazianzen, 470; Amphilochius, 473; Gregory Nyssen, 476; Ephrem the Syrian, 482; Ebedjesu, or the Syrian Christians, 488; Ambrose, Bp of Milan, 494; Philaster, 522; Gaudentius, 523; Theodore of Mopsuestia, 529; Jerom, 348 to 350; Rufinus, 573; the third council of Carthage, 574; Augustine, 578, 581, 583, 584; Chrysostom, 601, 602; Severian, 604; Victor of Antioch, 626; Innocent, Bp of Rome, 628; Isidore, of Pelusium, iii. 7; Theodoret, 10; Sedulius, 31; Gelasius, Bp of Rome, 42; Andrew, 43; in the Alexandrian MS. 45; in a Stichometry from Cotelerius, 49; another Stichometry, 50; Cosmas of A. 51, 52; Junilius, 58; the *Imperfect Work*, 65, 66; Gregory, Bp of Rome, 70; Isidore of Seville, 74; Leontius, 77; Damascenus, 80; Oecumenius, 84; Theophylact. 86; Euthymius, 89, 90; Nicephorus Callisti, 91

A Commentary upon the four gospels by Fortunatianus, ii. 443; upon Matthew and John by Didymus, 478; upon Luke, by Ambrose of Milan, 494, 495; upon Matthew, Luke, and John, by Theodore of Mopsuestia, 527; upon Matthew, by Jerom, 566; upon Mark, by Victor of Antioch, 625; upon the four gospels, by Theophylact, 86; Euthymius, and the time when written; 89, 90; whether Theophilus of Antioch wrote a commentary upon Matthew's or the other gospels? i. 383, 384

The Order in which the four gospels were written, according to Clement of Alexandria, Matthew, Luke, Mark, John, i. 395, 398; in which they were placed, as it seems, in Tertullian's time, first, the two written by apostles, and then the other two written by apostolical men, 433: the order of placing them according to Origen, and Eusebius; first Matthew, next Mark, then Luke, lastly John, 532; ii. 368, 369; so also, according to Jerom, 548, 549; Augustine, 583; Chrysostom, 603, 604; Cosmas, iii. 51, 52; Theophylact, 85; and others. Called commentaries, or memoirs, that is, short histories, i. 345, 421; a code, or collection of them in the time of Ignatius, 322; in the time of Trajan, 335, 336; of Irenæus, 372

GOSPELS the most excellent part of scripture, ii. 581; divers

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observations of Augustine upon them, 581, 582, 583; not certain in what place each gospel was written, 602; the time when they were written, according to Theophylact, iii. 86, 87; Euthymius, 89, 90; Nicephorus Callisti, 91; their late date supposed by Theodore of Mopsuestia, ii. 529; many advantages of their late date, that is, of their not being written till about 20 or 30 years after our Lord's ascension, iii. 37 to 40; the characters of the several gospels, ii. 620; the story that they were corrected in the time of the emperor Anastasius, as having been written by illiterate evangelists, considered, iii. 68; the benefit of several gospels, and their wonderful harmony, 88; the evangelists did not call their histories *gospels*; the faithful afterwards called them gospels, 84; nor did the evangelists prefix their names to their books, and the reason of it, ii. 604

Small Gospels, worn by superstitious people, ii. 572, 611; iii. 8; some cast lots upon them, ii. 597

Gospels according to the Egyptians, Basilides, Thomas, and Matthias, rejected by Origen, i. 552, 553

Gospels according to the Twelve, Basilides, Thomas, Matthias, rejected by Ambrose of Milan, ii. 494

Gospels according to the Egyptians, Thomas, Matthias, Bartholomew, the twelve apostles, Basilides, Apelles, and others not named, rejected by Jerom, ii. 562

Gospel according to the Egyptians; the obscurity of it, and how quoted by Clement of Alexandria, and rejected by him, i. 400, 407; supposed to be quoted in the fragment of what is called the second epistle of Clement of Rome, 304; I think not written before the third century, iii. 132; much neglected, i. 553

Gospel according to the Hebrews; or, *of the Nazarenes*: whether quoted by Ignatius, i. 323, 324; composed out of St. Matthew's and the other authentic gospels, with additions of some other things, received by oral tradition, 324; compare, 474; not confirmed by Papias, 338, 340; supposed to be quoted by Hegesippus, 357; how quoted by Clement of Alexandria, 407; by Origen, 553; see likewise the chapter of Eusebius, 404, 408, 421; translated by Jerom, 559; see also 551, iii. 50; and *Ebionites*. A character of it, 485, note [b]; St. Luke does not refer to the gospels according to the Egyptians and Hebrews, in the introduction to his gospel, 204 to 206

Gospel of James, or *Protevangelion*, composed by Leucius, iv. 632

Gospel of Matthias, ii. 370, 375, 387; how the *Traditions* of Matthias are quoted by Clement of Alexandria, may be seen, i. 410; iv. 636

Gospel of the Nativity of Mary, supposed to be written by Leucius, iv. 631, 632

Gospel according to Peter, confuted by Serapion, Bp of Antioch, and the obscurity of it, i. 414, 415, iv. 636; supposed by some moderns to have been composed by Leucius, i. 415; iv. 636; the Gospel according to Peter, or the book of James, mentioned by Origen, i. 554, 555; and see ii. 370, 375, 387, 560

Gospel according to Thomas, said to have been forged by the Manichees, ii. 229; but without reason, being of an earlier date, 232; see 370, 375, 387

Gospels,—of James, (or *Protevangelion*,) of the Infancy, of Matthias, of the Nativity of Mary, of Nicodemus, of Peter; see iv. 583, 630 to 657

Gospel (*The*) the true way of Salvation, two sermons, v. 118

Goths converted by Audius, ii. 412

Governors of the temple, i. 18, 21

Governors of provinces, their different behaviour toward the Christians, iv. 162, 163

Grabe, (*J. E.*) his argument upon the fragment of the second epistle ascribed to Clement of Rome, i. 293; an observation of his upon a passage of Justin Martyr, 348; upon a passage of Irenæus, omitting St. James, 371; commended, 449, 468; his judgment upon the doctrine of the apostles, and the Constitutions, ii. 387, 422 note [e], 424; his account of the Alexandrian MS. iii. 44

Granianus, (*Serenius*) proconsul of Asia, his letter to Adrian in favour of the Christians, iv. 51

Gratian, his edict against Heretics, ii. 499; the same repealed, 504; whether he refused the title of Pontifex Maximus, iv. 407; when he ordered the Altar of Victory to be removed out of the senate house, 455

Greeks, or Grecians, in Acts ix. 29, who they were, iii. 265; and those mentioned Acts xi. 20. 266; the Greeks in John xii. 20, 21, who they were, v. 480 to 482; the Grecians and Hebrews in Acts vi. 1. v. 487 to 493

Gregory, Bp of Illiberis, his works, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 451; was a Luciferian, 452

Gregory Nazianzen, his works and time, ii. 469; his testimony to the scriptures, 469 to 471; his judgment concerning synods of bishops, 472; did not understand the principles of moderation, 471, 472

Gregory, of Neocæsarea, called *Thaumaturgus*, comes to Origen, i. 523; his history, 591 to 596; testimonies to him, 596 to 601; his time, 601 to 603; was not at the second council of Antioch, 603; his works, 603 to 605; a creed ascribed to him, not his, 604, 605; his character, 605, 606; his testimony to the scriptures, 607, 608

Gregory Nyssen, his time and works, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 474, 475; select passages from him, 476, 477

Gregory I. *Bp of Rome*, his reason why the Manichees rejected marriage, ii. 514; his time, iii. 68; books of the Old Testament quoted by him, 69; books of the New Testament quoted by him, 69, 70; his respect for the scriptures, 71; select passages, 72, 73

Grotius, (*Hugo*) his judgment concerning *The Revelation*, i. 649; his remarks upon Trajan's persecution of the Christians, iv. 34; did not quote Thallus as a witness of the darkness at the time of our Saviour's passion, 67; his observations upon Porphyry's objections against the book of Daniel, 217, 221, 224, in the notes; quoted, v. 376, 390, 391, 392, 401, 409, 410, 411, 413, 414, 416, 417, 418, 419, 426, 431; commended, 388

H

Hagiographa, that division of the sacred books of the Old Testament, largely considered, ii. 543 to 546

Hallet, (*Jos.*) quoted, i. 300, 536, 538, 566; ii. 23, 63, 181, 492; iii 259, 336, 399, 417; v. 469; his observations upon the Christian *Agapæ*, or love feasts, iii. 24, 25; upon the doxology in the *Philopatris*, 155; upon the altar to the unknown God, 175, 176

Harmonius, son of Bardesanes, his character, i. 442

Harris, (*Dr.*) his funeral sermon, v. 25; his life and character, 31 to 33

Hasæus, (*Th.*) quoted, iii. 438

Hayne, (*T.*) quoted, iii. 443

Heart:—On keeping the Heart, a sermon, v. 302

Heathen people, imposed upon by their priests, ii. 72; their temples shut up by Constantine, 337; some of them demolished in his time, *ibid.*; their idolatrous worship forbidden, 338; remarks upon his laws against them, 344, 345; on account of the doctrine of the trinity, some of them thought that the Christians worshipped a plurality of gods, 399

Hebed-Jesu; see Ebedjesu.

Hebrew:—*The* EPISTLE *to the* HEBREWS; *To whom* it was written, iii. 324 to 328; to believing Jews in Palestine, under persecution, ii. 606; iii. 52, 74

In *what language* it was written, iii. 328, 329; said by some of the ancients to have been translated into Greek, by Clement of Rome or St. Luke, i. 291, iii. 52; by

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Luke, according to Clement of Alexandria, 394, 395, 399; Origen supposed it to have been written in Greek, i. 538; which is probable, ii. 391, 392; said to be translated into Greek by Luke or Clement, 382; probably written in Greek, and the judgments of divers learned moderns in favour of that opinion, 391, 392

By whom it was written, iii. 329 to 340; ascribed to Paul by Clement of Alexandria, i. 395, 399, 401; to Barnabas, by Tertullian, 427; by some to Barnabas, to Clement, or Luke, 532, iii. 74

The time and place of writing it, iii. 340, 341

Received, by Dionysius of Alexandria, i. 633; by some of the Novatians, ii. 66; Theognostus, 83; the author of a poem against the Marcionites, 93; Methodius, 106; Peter of Alexandria, 129; Archelaus, 139; Seraplon of Thmuis, 146; Titus of Bostra, 147; Hierax, 155; the Manichees, 215; and the Paulicians, 239; whether referred to by Arnobius, 255; referred to by Lactantius, 287; received by the other Arnobius, 256; Alexander Bp of Alexandria, 302; the Arians, 309, 310; Hilary of Poictiers, 413; Lucifer of Cagliari, 450; Faustinus and Marcellinus, 451; C. M. Victorinus, 454; Basil, 466; Gregory Nazianzen, 470; Amphilochius, 473; Gregory Nyssen, 475; Didymus, 478; Ephrem, 482; Ebedjesu, 488; Ambrose, 495; Philaster, 523; Gaudentius, 524; Theodore of Mopsuestia, 528; Jerom, 549, 556; Rufinus, 573; the third council of Carthage, 575; Chrysostom, 606; Severian, Bp of Gabala, 620; Chromatius, Bp of Aquileia, 625; Victor, of Antioch, 628; Paulinus, 629; the followers of Pelagius, 631; Palladius, iii. 5; Isidore of Pelusium, 7; Cyril, of Alexandria, 9; Theodoret, 11; Cassian, 17; Prosper, 21; the author of the Calling of the Gentiles, 22; and of the divine Promises and Predictions, *ibid.*; Salvian, 36; Cosmas, 53; the author of the Imperfect Work, 66; Gregory, Bp of Rome, 70; is in the Alexandrian MS. 45; received by Isidore of Seville, 74

Not received as Paul's by Caius, Irenæus or Hippolytus, i. 481, 482, 497, 502; not quoted by Cyprian, iii. 168 to 171; rejected by some of the Romans in the time of Eusebius and Jerom, i. 482, 483; and by some in the East, 518, 535, 537; doubted of by several, 537, 538; not received by Novatus, ii. 63; not received by the church of Rome in the time of Eusebius, 370, 372; not received by all, 558, 559, 575, 586

Whether quoted or alluded to by Clement of Rome, i. 299 to 301; known to and quoted by Irenæus, 364; but not certain that it was received by him as Paul's, 369; quoted in the Questiones et R., 343; seems to be referred to by Polycarp, 331; the grounds of Caius's rejecting it considered, 483, 484; Origen's judgment upon it, 583; how quoted by him, 535, 536; observations upon his judgment, 536 to 538; whether the Catholics rejected this epistle because it was perverted by the Novatians, ii. 263; probably it was received by Pamphilus, 121; doubtful whether it was received by Victorinus of Pettaw, 96; Eusebius's opinion of it, i. 291; whether quoted by Optatus, 492; whether received by the author of the Commentary upon thirteen of St. Paul's Epistles, 521; doubts about this epistle, and the reason of them, 522, 523; how quoted by Augustine, 585, 586; whether received by Pelagius, 631; doubted of by some of the Latins, because of the difference of the style, 556; see St. Paul's epistles.

Hegemonius, said to be author of a work ascribed to Archelaus, ii. 136, 137, 144

Hegesippus, a Hebrew Christian, his history and works, and testimony to the books of the New Testament, i. 356 to 358; his character, 356

Heidegger, (*J. H.*) quoted, iii. 443

Helcesaites, see *Elcesaites*.

Helena, mother of Constantine, her mean original, ii. 322; whether wife of Constantius Chlorus, *ibid.*; respect shewn her by Constantine, 323; her death, *ibid.* churches said to be built by her, 336; whether she found our Saviour's real cross, *ibid.*

Helene, queen of the Adiabenes, converted to Judaism, i. 64; relieves the Jews in a famine, 134

Heliodorus, author of the *Ethiopics*, iv. 356

Hell-torments, whether the Manichees believed them to be eternal, ii. 199; their eternity believed by Lactantius, 270

Helladius, a learned heathen and grammarian at Alexandria in the fourth century, afterwards at Constantinople, iv. 470, 473

Hellenism, the meaning of that word, iv. 345, note [d]

Helvidius, his opinion about the Lord's brethren, ii. 95

Heraclas, catechist and Bp of Alexandria; famous for learning, i. 513; mentioned again, 520, 521, 523

Heraclean, Bp of Chalcedon, his work against the Manichees, ii. 136, 144

Heracleon, a Valentinian, his time and country, iii. 462, iv. 583; books of the New Testament received by him, iii. 462; quoted the preaching of Peter, i. 554; it is probable that he received both the Old and New Testament, iv. 585; wrote commentaries on several parts of scripture, 584; remarks on those commentaries, 584, 585; they give testimony to the genuineness of the introduction to John's gospel, 586

Heraclitus, an ecclesiastical writer of the second century, i. 413

Hercules, his image and temple destroyed by the Christians, at Suffecta, in Africa, in the year 399, iv. 471

Heresy defined, ii. 233; iv. 505 to 508; a heretic, one separated from the church, and who acknowledges himself a Christian, 507; the unhappiness of heresy, ii. 160; advantage from it, 236; iv. 528, 529; the causes of heresy, 508, 509; many mistakes in the writers on this subject, 509, 510; of the number of heresies, 510, 511; heresies in the two first centuries principally two, those of the Docetæ who held two gods or first principles, and of the Ebionites who believed that our Saviour was a mere man, 511, 512; the seeds sown in the days of the apostles, 531, 532

HISTORY (The) of the HERETICS of the two first centuries after Christ, iv. 503 to 692

HERETICS, said to have corrupted the scriptures, i. 352; who of them did so, 563; several heretics mentioned by Methodius, iii. 105; severally censured by Photius, 148; how treated by Constantine, 338; remarks upon his treatment of them, 343, 344; heretics have been often treated with harshness, iv. 512; and greatly calumniated, 513; unjustly accused of magic, 513, 514; and lewdness, 515; Christians in general as well as heretics had thus been accused, *ibid.*; the accusations unjust, 515 to 518; the ancient heretics believed the unity of God, 519, 520; several heretics mentioned in the *Constitutions*, ii. 427; how to be treated according to Martin, Bp of Tours, 501, 511; sometimes discovered by their modest garb and behaviour, without inquiring into their faith, 504; the ancient heresiarchs generally men of letters, and borrowed their notions from the philosophers, iv. 526, 529; and moderate to those who differed from them, 530; they did not admit the pernicious consequences charged upon their doctrines, 531; their writings lost, ii. 463; how censured, by Cassian, iii. 18; by Vincentius Lirinensis, 24; and the author of the *Imperfect Work*, 63, 64; they received the same scriptures with the Catholics, and quoted them very much, 27, 28, 37; and made great use of them, iv. 521 to 523; they respected the apostles, 525; used also apocryphal books, 523, 524; said to err innocently, at least sincerely, iii. 37; a fine passage of Sozomen, concerning them, ii. 53, 54; order of the most early heretics, iv. 534

Hermas, his Pastor, or Shepherd, despised by some, approved

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by others, and his time, i. 305; placed in the time of Pope Pius by the author of a poem against the Marcionites, iii. 293; how quoted, by Irenæus, i. 273, 274; Clement of Alexandria, 406; Tertullian, 434; Origen, 551; not a canonical book, though genuine, ii. 370, 375, 386; not received as of authority, by Athanasius, 400, 401, 402; by Prosper, iii. 21

Hermias, an early author, who wrote against Gentilism, i. 414

Hermogenes, a heretic, confuted by Theophilus, Bp of Antioch, i. 383; the account of him from ancient authors, iv. 664; of his time and country, 663; his opinion concerning the eternity of matter, 665; he asserted one God, 666; some other of his opinions, 664, 666; set up no separate communion, 667; received both the Old and New Testament, 668; no account of his writings, *ibid.*

Herod the Great, an Idumean, i. 9; and yet a Jew, 10, 101; how he obtained the kingdom of Judea, 10, 148; the manner of his death, 10, 230; was always a dependent tributary prince, 148 to 149; reduced to a more strict subjection to the Romans, 151; several of his cruel actions rehearsed, 180, 181; Augustus's jest upon him for killing his sons, 183, 184; who of his children survived him, 214; several opinions concerning the time of his death, i. 231 to 233

Herod Agrippa, his several preferments till he became king of all Judea, i. 14; a zealous Jew, *ibid.*; his remarkable death, 14 to 16; his children, 16; his letter to Caligula to dissuade him from erecting his statue at Jerusalem, 49, 61, 85; how ridiculed at Alexandria, 87, 88; imprisoned by order of Tiberius, 128; complains to Petronius of an injury done the Jews in Syria, 98; presents a gold chain at Jerusalem, 128; orders Nazarites to be shaved, 116

Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, in the time of John the Baptist, and our Saviour, i. 12; his marriage with Herodias, *ibid.*; see also 212; banished by Caligula into Gaul, 13; was at Jerusalem at the time of our Saviour's crucifixion, 80

Herod king of Chalcis, married his niece Bernice, i. 16; see also 213, note [e]; had the government of the temple, 18, note [g]

Herod, son of Herod the Great, by Mariamne the high priest's daughter, his history, and that he was otherwise called Philip, and was the first husband of Herodias, i. 212

Herodians, who they were, i. 70

Herodias, married Herod the tetrarch, i. 12; her character, 12, 13; her daughter demands John Baptist's head, 13; who was her first husband, 212, 213

Herwaert, (*John Geo.*) his interpretation of Luke ii. 2. i. 165

Hesychius, *Bp in Egypt*, his edition of the Old and New Testament, ii. 111, 112, 113; mentioned again, 128

Heuman, (*C. A.*) his opinion concerning the bishopric and martyrdom of Hippolytus, i. 498; his edition of Lactantius commended, ii. 261, 266; his opinion concerning the Manichæism of Lactantius considered, 275; his remarks upon a passage of Polycrates Bp of Ephesus, 555; quoted, ii. 258, 279, 362, 568; iii. 6, 195, 197, 214, 267, 424, 426, 431, 433; his remarks upon Pliny's letter concerning the Christians examined, iv. 19, 21; quoted and commended, 250

Hierax, a learned Christian of Egypt, reckoned a Manichee, ii. 153; but without reason, 153, 154; his eminence, 154, 155; his testimony to the scriptures, 155

Hierocles, who wrote against the Christians at the beginning of Diocletian's persecution, iv. 112; an account of his work from Lactantius, 253 to 255; from Eusebius, 255, 256; he did not deny the truth of our Saviour's miracles, but set up Apollonius Tyanæus against him: he was well acquainted with the books of the Old and New Testament, and bears witness to their antiquity and genuineness, and mentions by name St. Peter and St. Paul, 254 to 258; see also 296, 297; guilty of great cruelties when he was præfect at Alexandria, 256, 257; different from Hierocles a philosopher at Alexandria, in the fifth century, 257

Hierocles of Alexandria, his time, history, and works, with remarks, iv. 416, 417

High priests, did rend their clothes upon extraordinary occasions, 181; mentioned in the plural number, *ibid.*; their sacred vestment, by whom kept at several times, 81, 82; see also *Vitellius*; their succession preserved by Josephus, 210

Hilary, deacon of Rome, his history, character, and principles, ii. 520; whether author of a Commentary upon thirteen of St. Paul's epistles, *ibid.*

Hilary of Poictiers, his works and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 412, 413

Hillel and *Shammai*, their different opinions, i. 70

Himerius, sophist and professor of rhetoric at Athens, under whom Basil and Gregory Nazianzen studied, iv. 349, 350

Hippolytus, (*Bp of Porto*) probably author of *The Treatise of the Universe*, ascribed to Caius, and others, i. 489; his history and works, 495 to 497; what sort of a Bishop he was, and whether he was a martyr, 497, 498; wrote against the Valentinians, Marcionites, Nicolaitans, Noëtians and all heretics, 495, 496; against the Noëtians, 581, 585, 586; did not receive the epistle to the Hebrews as Paul's, 497, 502; opinions of moderns concerning his remaining works, 499, 500; his testimony to the scriptures, 501 to 503; though he wrote in Greek, he may be reckoned among Latins, iii. 330; quoted, v. 402, note [a]

HISTORY of the APOSTLES and EVANGELISTS, writers of the New Testament, iii. 138 to 475

Hody's (*H.*) opinion concerning the Hagiographa, ii. 543, 547; quoted, iii. 75, 79, 357, 360

Hogg's (*Mr.*) note concerning the Ophians, iv. 657

HOLY SPIRIT, meaning of it in the Scriptures, v. 215 to 217, 395 to 431, 493, 494. A Letter upon the Personality of the Spirit, v. 473, 474; see also the word *Spirit*

Homoüsian, different sentiments concerning that word, ii. 76

Homoüsians, called heretics, iii. 63, 64; they persecuted the Arians, and others, *ibid.*

Honoratus, *Augustine's friend*, once a heathen, afterwards a Manichee, ii. 150, 159.

Hormista of Orosius, iv. 482

Hours of the day, computed in the gospel of John, as in the other gospels, in the Jewish manner, iii. 238; v. 482 to 484

Huber, (*Z.*) commended, i. 56

Huet, (*P. D.*) quoted, i. 403; his opinion concerning the design of Philostratus in writing the life of Apollonius of Tyana, iv. 263, 264

Hunt (*Dr.*) quoted, v. 413; his funeral sermon, 51; his life and character, 57 to 63

Hymns to the gods, were sometimes in prose, sometimes in verse, iv. 23

Hymns, used in the church, afterwards laid aside, i. 628

Hypatia, her great merit, and the manner of her death, iv. 425, 426

Hypythians, said by Origen to use spurious writings, i. 559

Hyrcanus, high-priest and prince of Judea, i. 9; put to death by Herod, 180

I

Jackson, (*J.*) his opinion of the time of a work of Novatian, and of Sabellianism, examined, ii. 57 to 59; an answer to his remarks on the fifth volume of the former edition of this work, 131 to 135

Jamblichus, his time, and his life of Pythagoras, with remarks, shewing that he did not aim to oppose Pythagoras to our Saviour, iv. 269, 270; another work of his, with remarks, 270, 271

JAMES, ST. son of Zebedee, the first martyr for Christ among the apostles, beheaded by Herod Agrippa, iii. 213; said,

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but without reason, to have planted the gospel in Spain, 214, note [b]

James, (St.) the son of Alpheus, his history from the New Testament, whereby it appears that he was an apostle, iii. 368 to 370; his history from ancient writers, 370 to 378; who he was, and his history from Jerom, ii. 559, 560; he was an apostle according to Epiphanius, 419; Augustine, 587; the son of Alpheus, consequently an apostle, in the Imperfect Work, iii. 66

Not esteemed to be an apostle by Eusebius, ii. 383; Cyril of Jerusalem, 410; and see the Synopsis, 405; The Constitutions, 438; but see 426, 436; Gregory Nyssen, 476; said to be one of Christ's seventy disciples in the Synopsis of Dorotheus, 88

He presided in the church of Jerusalem after the death of St. Stephen, iii. 369, 370, 372, 373; he presided in the council at Jerusalem, 370; his excellent character, 370; how he was the Lord's brother, 372, 373, 379 to 381; according to the Commentary upon St. Paul's thirteen epistles, ii. 521; according to Pelagius, 631; Theodoret, iii. 12; Oecumenius, 84; Theophylact, 87; why called the Less, iii. 383; called also the Just, 384; other marks of respect for him, *ibid.*

His martyrdom in the temple, with the manner and time of his death, iii. 374 to 379; thirty years after our Lord's ascension according to Bede, 79; the account of his death, 543; the paragraph concerning him in Josephus not genuine, 542, 543; see i. 45

His Epistle: Its genuineness, iii. 385, 386; when written, 386, 387; to whom, 84, 386 to 388

It seems to be referred to by Clement of Rome, i. 301; by Hermas, 309, 310; how quoted by Origen, 538, 539, 541; whether referred to by Commodian, ii. 73; received by the Paulicians, *ibid.*; quoted by the younger Arnobius as written by James the apostle, 257; seems to be referred to by Lactantius, 288; received by Athanasius, 400, 401; Cyril of Jerusalem, 400; the council of Laodicea, 415; Epiphanius, 417, 418; supposed to be referred to in the Constitutions, 438; received by Gregory Nazianzen, 470; Amphilochius, 473; the Syrian churches, 488, iii. 53; Jerom, and generally in his time, ii. 559, 560; Auguſtine, 579, 587; Chrysostom, 607; Sulpicius Severus, 622; Chromatius, Bp of Aquileia, 625; Innocent Bp of Rome, 628; Paulinus, 630; Pelagius, 631; Palladius, iii. 5; Cyril of Alexandria, 9; Theodoret, 12; Cassian, 17; Prosper, 21; Salvian 36; the Imperfect Work, 66; Oecumenius, 84; Theophylact, 87

Not quoted by Irenæus, i. 370, 371; nor by Clement of Alexandria, 403; nor by Tertullian, 428, 429, 430; nor Cyprian, ii. 24; not received by all in the time of Eusebius, 369, 373; and Jerom, 559; doubted of by some, iii. 74; especially in the east, 59

Idacius, Bp of Emerita, prosecutor of Priscillian and his followers, ii. 499

Idumeans, who they were, and their conversion to Judaism, i. 9

Jehudah, or Judah, the holy, composer of the Mishna, his time and character, iii. 547, 548, 551

Jeremiah the prophet, said by some not to have died, ii. 91, 92; an apocryphal book, with his name, mentioned by Jerom, 562

Jerom, his time, ii. 531, 532; his history and character, 532 to 539; his masters in Latin, in grammar, &c. 532; in Hebrew, 533; his account of apocryphal books of the Old Testament, 30; well acquainted with Jewish traditions, iii. 551; his accounts of the Nazarene Christians, 484; confutes the Manichees in his works, ii. 148; what he says of their fasting, 160; wrote severely against heretics, iv. 512, 522, 523; favoured by pope Damasus, and made his secretary, ii. 464, 465; several of his works mentioned, *ibid.*; quoted, v. 394. 402, and elsewhere. The time of his stay at Rome, ii. 464; how censured by Palladius, 535. An account of his book Of Illustrious Men, 432; of some other of his works, 534; his editions and versions of the scriptures, and commentaries upon them, 565, 566; his testimony to the scriptures, 539, &c. select passages, 571, 572; once an admirer of Origen, afterwards his enemy, 624; his Latin version of the scriptures quoted by Cassian, iii. 17; and Gregory bishop of Rome, 72

Jerusalem, when taken by Pompey, iii. 492; when Titus began to besiege it, 496; when he took it, 492, 496, 523, 524; the distresses of the city during the siege, see *Famine*. The number who perished in the siege and in Judea, 525, 529, 570; the city afterwards called Ælia, ii. 119

Jesus: the true time of his nativity, i. 192, 193; said to be found by the wise men of the East, not in a stable, but in a house, iii. 88; the time of the duration of his ministry, i. 200, 231, 232; ii. 40, 138, 456, 487; iii. 45, 78, 88; the time of his crucifixion, i. 208; his age at the time of his baptism, ii. 420; how many passovers in his ministry, *ibid.*; his ministry said to continue three years and a half, 379

He wrought no miracles in early life, and disdained ease and luxury, ii. 487, 612; Remarks upon his three miracles of raising the dead, 487; A Vindication of these in answer to Woolston's objections, v. 332 to 370; owing to modesty that he said of Jairus's daughter, she sleeps, ii. 627; was a philosopher and truly religious, 365; called the first martyr, 471; by some said to have cleansed the temple twice, by others but once, *ibid.*; all his miracles healing and beneficial, iii. 55; he said and did many things not recorded in the gospels, ii. 627; iii. 88; his miracles true and certain, and well attested, 578, 579; his predictions of the calamities coming on the Jews, 496; Proofs of his resurrection, ii. 477; the evidence of it increased by the scrupulousness of Thomas, 503; the ends of his ministry and death, 598, 599; he did not use force, 599; his character by Palladius, iii. 5

He had a human soul and body, v. 373, &c; according to the ancient catholic Christians, 393, 394; was not an angel, 425, 426; is the Messiah, iii. 593; why called Christ, ii. 612; his great dignity as the Messiah, v. 386, 387; not reputed to be God while on earth, either by the Jews or by his disciples, iii. 13; why called the Son of God, 67; v. 197 to 200, 381 to 384

Apocryphal books concerning his nativity, and that he left no written volume, ii. 563; his nativity according to Talmudical writers, iii. 532, 533; his journey into Egypt according to the same writers, 533, 534; his disciples according to them, 355; and his last sufferings, 356

Jesus, or Josbua, the son of Ananus, his remarkable story, iii. 519, 520, 522, 536

Jewish believers, their opinion concerning the person of Christ, ii. 235, note [d]; see *Ebionites* and *Nazarenes*. The faith of early Jewish believers a valuable testimony to the truth of the Christian religion, iii. 477 to 485; their faith a great virtue, 482

Jewish canon, by whom received. See *Canon*.

Jewish unbelievers, how they treated the primitive Christians, iii. 486 to 488

Jews had the free exercise of their religion in Judea, i. 20; their civil state in Judea, according to the evangelists, 21 to 41; according to other ancient writers, 41 to 57; could imprison men, 32; could inflict lesser penalties 24, 32, 33, 44; had a council, 25, 32, 44; could not legally inflict capital punishments, 26 to 28, 37 to 41, 47; objections against that supposition considered, 28 to 31; had a council at Alexandria, 46, 47; decided little differences among themselves at Sardis, 47; privileges bestowed upon them by the Romans and others, 96, &c.; excused by the Romans from military service, 125, 145; and from appearance in the courts of judicature on the Sabbath and the preparation, 98; were riotous, 50, 51, 109, 210; practised polygamy, 22, 23; and divorces, 22, 23, 214; were very corrupt

Digitized by Google

and wicked, 77, 78; numerous out of Judea, 60, 61; their twelve tribes in being at the time of our Saviour and his apostles, 61; the registers of their families also then in being, 147; expected the Messiah, 72 to 74, 75; required a sign, 74; why they rejected Jesus, 76, 77; their sin in rejecting him very great, iii. 505, 588 to 591; their enmity to the first Christians, i. 50, 51, 90, 91, 94, 108, 109. iii. 481 to 488; were numerous at Rome, i. 63, 98; banished from Rome by Tiberius, 98; by Claudius, 135; uneasy under the Roman government, 118; their request to be under a Roman governor after the death of Herod, 44, 158; crucified by the Roman soldiers before the walls of Jerusalem, iii. 515, 516, 525, 568; ript up for the sake of treasure, 516, 567; the numbers that perished at the siege of Jerusalem, and elsewhere, 525, 528, 570; many compelled to fight in amphitheatres, 526, 571; required to pay tribute to the capitol at Rome, 528, 620; the advantages which Christians have from the dispersion and subsistence of the Jews, ii. 598, 618; their circumstances a cogent argument for the truth of the Christian religion, iii. 591, 592. Three Discourses on this subject from Rom. xi. 11. v. 34 to 50

Ignatius, Bp of Antioch, his time, i. 313; the smaller epistles ascribed to him genuine, 315; according to Dr. Jortin, who rejects the Apostolical Constitutions, iii. 97; his testimony to the books of the New Testament, 316 to 323; how quoted by Origen, 551, 552; the time of his martyrdom, 315. IV. 34

Imperial laws concerning Gentile people and their worship, iv. 435 to 445

Imprisonment, the Roman method, i. 127

Improvement of time, a sermon, v. 253

India, Christians there, iii. 55

Infants at Bethlehem, their slaughter mentioned by Christian writers and by Macrobius a heathen author, i. 183, 184; why not related by Josephus, 180 to 183

Innocent I. Bp of Rome, persecutes the Novatians, ii. 57; his Catalogue of the books of the Old and New Testament, 628

Inquisitiveness in things of religion recommended, i. 612. iv. 42

Inscription, in honour of Titus after the conquest of Judea, iii. 533; concerning the Christians in the time of Nero, 608

Instrument, that word sometimes used by Latin writers instead of Testament, iii. 140

Job, his book said to be written by Moses, ii. 103; his dunghill visited by superstitious people in Chrysostom's time, ii. 619

John the Baptist, the Manichæan opinion of him, ii. 112; the boundary of the Old and New Testament, iii. 18; said to have been baptized by Christ, 67; how he was revered for his austere character by Josephus and many other Jews, iii. 536, 537; the genuineness of the paragraph concerning him in the works of Josephus asserted, 534 to 537

JOHN, (ST.) APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST; his history from the New Testament, iii. 212, 213; called the Divine, ii. 627. iii. 9, 52; by Eusebius, ii. 380; Athanasius 401; and Cyril 410; he was younger than Peter, and survived all the apostles, 629; was related to the Lord, and why beloved above the other disciples, iii. 87; had three mothers, *ibid.*; when he left Judea to go to reside at Ephesus, 219; was banished, i. 426, by Domitian into Patmos, where he wrote the Revelation, ii. 622. iii. 76; the time of his banishment, 220 to 225; how long he was there, and when he returned to Ephesus, 225, 226; his age when he was called to be an apostle, and at the time of his death, 218, 219; he lived to the time of Trajan, ii. 533; and his age, 533, 534; what Suidas says of his great age, 608; several things said of him by ancient ecclesiastical writers, iii. 219, 220; several stories concerning him rehearsed and examined, ii. 554, 555; whether he met Ebion, or Cerinthus, at a public bath in Ephesus, i. 325; whether he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, 426; he raised a dead man to life at Ephesus, 480; said to have delivered a creed to Gregory Thaumaturgus, 593; his superior knowledge of the doctrine of the Trinity, 604; why he and his brother James were surnamed by our Lord Boanerges, iii. 213, 214; whether he followed our Lord to the high-priest's and let in Peter, 215, 216; why our Lord committed the care of his mother to him, 216

His great excellence, and the superiority of his gospel above those of the other evangelists, and above Peter, ii. 552, 583, 602. iii. 9; his gospel was not written by way of opposition to any heretics, iii. 239 to 241; therein the errors of Cerinthus and others confuted, 239; written the last of the four gospels, and the occasion of writing it, and its superior excellence, i. 365, 395. ii. 629. iii. 86; the time and occasion of writing it according to Victorinus, ii. 95; Theodore of Mopsuestia, ii. 529; the occasion of writing it, 368, 369, 529, 552, 553, 602, 629, 630. iii. 52, 86; the use and importance of it. ii. 603; the opinion of divers learned moderns concerning the time when it was written, iii. 229; that it was written at Ephesus 52; before the destruction of Jerusalem about the year 68, 229 to 237; objections to this considered, 237 to 242; his gospel not written till after the destruction of Jerusalem, ii. 603; before the destruction of Jerusalem, iii. 86; about the time of it, 91; many years after it, 90; after his being in Patmos, 79; written the last in the New Testament, 41; before the Revelation, 48; his gospel and epistles written after his return from Patmos, and after the death of Domitian, 79; his gospel said to be written in Asia, 74; in Patmos, 87; at Ephesus, according to Irenæus, i. 365; Ebedjesu, ii. 488.

Testimonies of ancient writers to his gospel, iii. 226 to 228; referred to by Ignatius, i. 317; received by Justin M. 344; Athenagoras, 379; Theophilus of Antioch, 384; called a spiritual gospel, 395; his gospel and first epistle universally received; his second and third epistles not so received in Origen's time, 532, 533, 540; his gospel the first fruit of the gospels, 543; quoted by Novatus, ii. 60, 61; by Dionysius of Rome, 71; by Victorinus, 95; by Anatolius, 78; Theognostus, 82; Archelaus, 139; his gospel and second epistle quoted by Alexander of A. ii. 302; his gospel and first epistle universally received in the time of Eusebius and before, 368, 369; his gospel mentioned with marks of great respect, 475, 494, 495; his gospel and epistles and Revelation received by Jerom, 548, 553, 554; observations upon his gospel, iii. 242 to 244; a commentary upon it by Cyril of A. iii. 8; respectfully quoted by Amelius, iv. 200; he computes the hours of the day as the other evangelists, after the Jewish manner, iii. 298, v. 482 to 484.

His *three epistles*; their genuineness, iii. 425, 426; the time of writing the first of them, 426 to 428; to whom it was sent, 428, 429; observations upon the second epistle, 429 to 131; upon the third, 431 to 436; when they were written, 437; his first epistle referred to by Polycarp, i. 332; and the martyrs at Lyons, 362; quoted by Papias, 338, 340, 341; by Clement of Alexandria, 403; by Tertullian, 429, 430; his first and second epistles quoted by Irenæus, 370, 371; his first epistle often quoted by Dionysius of Alexandria, and his second and third spoken of as ascribed to him, 635; whether his second and third epistles were received by Cyprian, 26; his first epistle quoted by Novatus, 64, by Commodian, 73, Methodius, 107, Phileas, 127, and by the Novatians, 64, by Archelaus, 139, and by the Manichees, 216; his three epistles received by the Paulicians, 239; the second and third not received by all, 369, 384; his second epistle quoted by Alexander, 302; by Lucifer of Cagliari, 450, Optatus, 491; his third epistle, and the Revelation, quoted

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in the Commentary upon thirteen of St. Paul's epistles, 521; his first epistle received by all, the other two doubted of, 553; his first epistle said to be written to the Corinthians, 587. iii. 61, 79; his three epistles received by Innocent, ii. 628, Arethas, iii. 57, and all who had the same canon with that now generally received; his second and third epistles doubted of by some, 74

The Revelation published in the time, and after the time of Domitian, ii. 97; but see iii. 450 to 452: see *Canon of the New Testament*, and *Catholic epistles*, and *the Revelation*

John the elder, i. 337, 339

John the publican at Cæsarea, his good character, i. 120

John of Gischala, how he escaped from that place, and got to Jerusalem, iii. 510; taken prisoner, 570; and condemned to perpetual imprisonment, according to Josephus, 525; the account of his death in Josippon, 570; see likewise p. 582

John, a martyr in Diocletian's persecution, remarkable for his memory, ii. 119

Jones, (*J.*) quoted, i. 295. ii. 29, 113. iii. 598, 617; his opinion of the epistle ascribed to Barnabas, i. 284; a remark of his upon a passage in Justin M. 348; upon St. Mark's gospel, 398; quoted and commended, iii. 183, and elsewhere; thinks that Seleucus, in Augustine's book of Heresies, is the same as Leucius, but is mistaken, iv. 625; is mistaken also in making Leucius a Manichee, 630

Jortin, (*Dr.*) quoted, i. 253. iv. 30, note [l]. 52, note [h]. 181, 509. v. 384, notes; his observations upon M. Antoninus the philosopher, iv. 74, 78; receives the *Philosophy of Oracles* as a work of Porphyry, 238

Joseph, Husband of Mary, on what account he was obliged by the decree of Augustus to enrol himself, i. 147; why he went to Bethlehem to be enrolled, *ibid.*; a current tradition that he was a widower, and had children by a former wife, iv. 633

Joseph, a Jew, beaten for reading the gospels, i. 24

Josephus, (*Flavius*) *the Jewish historian*, his time, works, and character, iii. 488 to 491; made governor of Galilee, i. 46; pretended to prophecy, 154; was a firm Jew, 254, 183; his passages concerning a terrible execution at Jerusalem, in Herod's time, 152, 153, 190, 191; remarks upon them, 152 to 156, 181; calls Livia, Augustus's wife, Julia, 216; calls Caiaphas Joseph, 216; his silence no objection against St. Matthew's history of the slaughter of the infants, 180; shy of mentioning Christian affairs, 135; some remarkable omissions in his history, 176 to 178; his speech to the Jews to induce them to surrender to Titus, 148; how he flattered Vespasian and Titus, 154, iii. 490, 501, 547; endeavoured to save the honour of the Roman government, and the Jewish nation, i. 118, 119; his works not much respected by the Jews, iii. 491, 561; his History of the Jewish war, and the siege of Jerusalem, and the conquest of Judea, 505 to 528; the value of his testimony, 529 to 531. iv. 10; observations upon his writings and testimony, iii. 544 to 546. Two passages concerning dæmoniacs, with remarks, i. 266 to 268; his catalogue of the books of the Old Testament, ii. 545. Three paragraphs in his works, the genuineness of which are considered: first, concerning John the Baptist, iii. 534 to 536; second, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, 537 to 540. iv. 1 to 9; correspondence with Dr. Chandler on this subject, i. p. xlv, xlvi; some farther observations, p. xlvi; third, concerning James, the Lord's brother, iii. 542 to 544; what may have been the reason of Josephus not having mentioned any thing concerning our Saviour, 544 to 547. Josephus mentioned by Anatolius, ii. 78; by the author of the Imperfect Work, iii. 67

Joseph Ben Gorion, or Josippon, his age, work, and character, iii. 560, 561, 573, 574; his testimony to the Jewish war, the siege of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the city and temple by Titus, 562 to 572; observations upon his work, 573, 574

Jotopata, the siege of that place, and the event of it, iii. 489, 562

Jovinian, against whom Jerom wrote, ii. 534

Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, his character of Polycarp, i. 325, 326; his history, time, works, and testimony to the scriptures, 363 to 377; wrote no commentary upon the Revelation, 348, 371; fragments ascribed to him, 375; the time and character of his Latin interpreter, ii. 13, 14; he was not a martyr, i. 365. iv. 163; his account of the Heretics, Basilidians, 535, 554; Cainites, 652; Carpocratians, 558 to 560; Cerdon, 586; Cerinthus, 564; Marcosians, 578 to 582; Marcionites, 588, &c.; Ophians, 655; Saturninus, 532; Sethians, 647, 649; he observes that the heretics bear testimony to the scriptures, 520; in his long and particular arguments with Valentinus and other heretics, he does not charge them with polytheism, 519; quoted, v. 391

Isaiah, sawn asunder, ii. 92; his book rather a gospel than a prophecy, 568; his *Ascension* or *Anabaticon*, 155, mentioned again by Jerom, 562

Isidore, son of Basilides, i. 438

Isidore of Pelusium, quoted, ii. 536; his time, works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 6 to 8; his observations upon the testimony of Josephus, 531

Isidore Bp of Seville, his time, works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 73—76

Italic version, whether mentioned by Augustine, ii. 595. See Abp of Canterbury's conjecture, 123

Ithacius, Bp of Sossuba, prosecutor of Priscillian, ii. 499 to 501; his character, 505; deposed, 508

Ittigius, (*Tho.*) his remark upon a passage of Justin M. i. 348; upon Tatian's Harmony, 354; quoted and commended, iii. 539

Judaize, the meaning of that word, iii. 403

Judas the traitor, present at the institution of the Lord's supper, ii. 611; observations concerning him, 618, iii. 6

Judas of Galilee, his principles, i. 119, 158; *his time*, 158

Judas, a Christian writer, his history, *i.* 578; author of a Commentary upon Daniel's seventy weeks, how he was affected with the cruelty of Severus's persecution, iv. 166, 167

Jude (*St.*) his history, iii. 437 to 440; called also Thaddeus and Lebbeus, 437, 439; not certain that he was a martyr, 438; reasons for thinking that he was an husbandman before he was called to be an apostle, 439, 440; the genuineness of the epistle ascribed to him, 440 to 445; to whom it was sent, 440, 445; the time of writing it, 445 to 447; not quoted by Irenæus, i. 371; quoted by Clement of Alexandria, 403; and Tertullian, 430; how quoted by Origen, 541; why rejected by some, 559; not cited by Cyprian, ii. 26; cited by the anonymous author against the Novatian heretic, 25; received by the Paulicians, 239; not universally received in the time of Eusebius, or before, 369, 374; whether received by him, 384; quoted by Lucifer of Cagliari, 450; rejected by some, but generally received in Jerom's time, 561; received by Innocent, 628; Isidore of Pelusium, iii. 7; Cyril of Alexandria, 9; Cassian, 17, and others. See *Catholic epistles*

Judea, first brought into subjection to the Romans, by Pompey, iii. 492; reduced to the state of a province after the removal of Archelaus, i. 43; a branch of the province of Syria, 44, 48, 157; had in it no Roman governor with power of life and death, between Pilate's removal and Herod Agrippa's accession, 49, 50; its state under Herod the great, 147 to 149

Judgment, (*Private*) its rights asserted, ii. 272, 273

Judith, how quoted by Origen, i. 557; not reckoned a canonical book by Jerom, ii. 540, 541, nor Rufinus, 573

Julian, emperor, his passage concerning our Saviour's enrol-

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ment by Cyrenius, i. 141; does justice to the Novatians, ii. 54; how he treated Titus of Bostra, 146, his edict forbidding Christians to teach grammar, and other parts of literature, 453, 455; a letter of his to Photinus, 444; was a persecutor, iii. 93. iv. 295; his time and character, and behaviour towards the Christians, 311 to 321; whom he forbade to teach rhetoric, 320, 342, 375; called the Christians Galileans, 321; when he renounced Christianity and embraced Hellenism, 318, 345; how he dissembled his real sentiments for a good while, 375; his regard for the Jewish people, and his design to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, v. 44. iv. 322 to 332; extracts out of his work against the Christians, which are a testimony to the books of the New Testament, 332 to 341; the sum of those extracts, 341, 342, 433, 434; extracts out of his orations and epistles, 342 to 348; vindicated from some charges, 316, 317; his character in Eutropius, 371; makes frequent profession of moderation, and yet was a persecutor, 318 to 321, 342, 343, 347, 348; his character by Cave, 321, note e

Juliana, friend of Symmachus, from whom Origen received his version of the scriptures, i. 447

Julius Africanus. See *Africanus*

Julius Capitolinus. See *Capitolinus*

Julius Cassianus. See *Cassianus*

Junilius, an African Bp. his work, time, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 58, 59

Justin Martyr, his history, i. 341; his works, 342; his account of the Jews cursing Christ in their synagogues, 94; his passages concerning Cyrenius, 140; concerning the slaughter of the infants, 183; concerning the Jewish practice of divorces, 22; not author of the epistle to Zena and Serenus, nor of that to Diognetus, nor of some other works ascribed to him, 342, 349; the time of his apologies, and of his dialogue with Trypho, 342; the pathetic address at the end of his first apology, iv. 42, 43; his testimony to the scriptures, i. 343 to 349; wrote no commentary upon the Revelation, 348; did not use apocryphal books, *ibid.*; imitated Aristides in his first apology, 437; quoted and animadverted upon, v. 388, 389; he wrote against Marcion, iv. 590. Of the Quæstiones et Responsiones ascribed to him, i. 343

Justus, of Tiberias, what Josephus says of him, i. 40; mentioned again, 182; his testimony to the conquest of Judea, by Titus, iii. 531, 532

Justus, præfect of Asia, a zealous Gentile: his history from Eunapius, iv. 386

Juvenal, his time and works, iii. 616; his testimony to Nero's persecution of the Christians, *ibid.*; and to Domitian's persecution, 617

Juvencus, his work and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 407

Ixates, his conversion to Judaism, i. 64; sends money to Jerusalem in a time of famine, 134; his relations in Jerusalem surrender to Titus, and are received by him, iii. 523, 569

K.

Kepler quoted, i. 165, 207

Keuchenius, (*Pet.*) quoted, i. 140, 166; quoted and commended, v. 525

King (*P.*) quoted, v. 425

King, (*Ri.*) who he was, iv. 106

Kingdom of heaven taken by force, a sermon, v. 236

Kortholt, (*C.*) his judicious observations upon Pliny's epistle to Trajan, iv. 20; and upon Trajan's rescript, 29, note c

Kuster, (*L.*) quoted and commended, iii. 32, 33; quoted, iv. 270

L.

Lactantius, his character of Tertullian's style and apology, i. 417; how he used the Sibylline books, 455; his character of Cyprian's writings, ii. 8; his character by Jerom, 244, 278; his history and time, 257 to 260; his works, 260 to 267; whether the book of the deaths of persecutors be his, 264 to 266. iv. 298, 299; select passages from him, ii. 267 to 275; errors ascribed to him, 275; whether he held Manichæan principles, 275 to 277; what pope Damasus said of his epistles, 260, 261; his character, 278 to 280; his testimony to the scriptures, 280 to 292; what he says of the lawyer Ulpian, iv. 179; accounts of two writers against the Christians, at the beginning of Dioclesian's persecution, one anonymous, the other Hierocles, 252 to 255; takes notice of the cruelties of Dioclesian's persecution, 282; mentioned v. 402

Laertius, (*Diogenes*) his time and work, iv. 171; the inscription on the altar to the Unknown God, in Acts xvii. 23, illustrated by a paragraph in his work, 171 to 176; whether he refers to the Christian eucharist, 176

Lampe, (*F. A.*) quoted, iii. 216, 219, 220, 226, 229, 237, 239, 380, and elsewhere

Ælius Lampridius says that Adrian intended to build temples to Christ, which story is examined, iii. 54 to 56; supposed to refer to M. Antoninus's deliverance in Germany, 102; his passages relating to Alexander Severus as favourable to the Christians, 177 to 179; what he says of Heliogabalus's design to unite the Christian with other religions, 251

Laodicea, the church there planted by St. Paul, iii. 362, &c.

Laodicea, (*The council of*) their catalogue of the books of the Old and New Testament, with remarks, ii. 414 to 416

Laodiceans, an epistle to them, whether used by the Manichees, ii. 216; rejected by all, according to Jerom, 556; an epistle supposed to be sent to them, but was rather from them, iii. 11, 85, 87

Lardner, (*Mr. Rich.*) father to the author of this work, his character, i. p. xliii

La Roche, (*Michael*) his Memoirs of literature quoted, ii. 94

Latin translation of the Old Testament, read in Christian churches in the first ages, made from the Greek of the Seventy, ii. 594; of Jerom's translations, see ii. 594, 595, *and his works under his name in this Index.* The Latin translation of the New Testament said to have been in great disorder in Jerom's time, 569, 570, and see 595

Latronian, a Priscillianist, put to death at Treves, with Priscillian, ii. 497

Launoy, (*J.*) his dissertation concerning Victorinus of Pettaw, ii. 89

Lawyers, who they were, i. 69, 70

Learning not discouraged by the Christian religion, this appears from the catechetical school at Alexandria, in the early days of Christianity, i. 390; in which presided Pantænus, Clement, Origen, and others of great fame for learning: the library at Jerusalem, erected by Alexander, Bp of that city, 493, 494; and the library of Cæsarea, erected and furnished by Pamphilus, ii. 116, 117, 120; from the method of Origen in educating young men under his care, i. 591, 592, and from the many learned Christians in every age.

Lenfant, his argument concerning the inscription of the epistle to the Ephesians, ii. 466, 467; quoted v. 378, note. 381, note

Leo, Bp of Rome, how he treated the Manichees, ii. 161; his account of the opinions of the Priscillianists, 512 to 514; his charges against them considered, 516; likewise against the Manichees, 241, 242; his want of candour towards such as were called heretics, 518; his time and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 34 to 36

Leonides, Origen's father, divers particulars concerning his family, and suffering martyrdom in the persecution of Severus, i. 519, 520, 589. iv. 166

Leontius, Bp of the Novatians at Rome, ii. 55

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Leontius of Constantinople, his time, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 76 to 78
Leucius, a follower of Marcion, and one of the chief of the Docetæ, iv. 627, 636; had different names, 630; his time, ii. 231. iv. 627; his opinions, ii. 230, 231. iv. 627, 628; not a Manichee, 630; an account of his writings in general, 629, 630; author of an apocryphal book entitled *Travels of the Apostles*, i. 411; said to be author of the Gospel of Peter, 415. iv. 636; of the History of the nativity of the virgin, 632; the Protevangelion, or Gospel of James, 632, 633; the Gospel of Nicodemus, or Acts of Pilate, 635, 636; said to have interpolated the Gospel of the infancy, 634; writers who mention him, ii. 230, iv. 625, 626, 630; remarks upon his books, ii. 231, iv. 633, 634; these forgeries prove the truth of canonical scripture, 639
Leusden, (*J.*) quoted, ii. 545, 546
Libanius, sophist of Antioch, his time, works, and character, iv. 355, 356; averse to Christianity, yet friendly to some Christians, *ibid.*; flourished many years as an author, i. 444; his letter to Priscian, president of Palestine, concerning the Manichees, ii. 144; Theodore of Mopsuestia and Chrysostom his scholars, 526; extracts out of his epistles, iv. 356, 357; out of his other works, 357, 358; recommends moderation in things of religion, *ibid.* and 362; his Oration for the temples to Theodosius, A. D. 390, with remarks, 358 to 369
Liberius, Bp of Rome, how treated by Constantius, iv. 373
Libertines, who they were, i. 62, 63
Library at Cæsarea, repaired by Euzoïus, ii. 317; use of by Euthalius, iii. 38. See *Pamphilus*
Library, Four Letters of Dr. Lardner's published in that periodical pamphlet in 1761 and 1762, v. 465 to 472
Licinius, marries Constantine's sister Constantia, ii. 326; wars between him and Constantine, 327; his persecution of the Christians, and the time of it, 262; put to death, 340
Lightfoot, (Dr.) his account of the power of the Jews, considered, i. 56; quoted and commended, iii. 302, 311, 313, 314, 316, 397, note [e], 548, 549 notes, 553, 555 to 557, 572
Limborch quoted, v. 390, 392, 410, 411, 418
Linus, one of the first bishops of Rome, i. 291, 368, 374
Livia, Augustus's wife, called Julia by Josephus, i. 216
Locke, (J.) quoted, v. 390, 391, 411, 414, 415
Logos, a letter concerning the question whether the Logos supplied the place of a human soul in the person of Jesus Christ, v. 373 to 431
Lollia Paulina, how her head when cut off was examined by Agrippina, i. 13
Longinian, the correspondence between him and Augustine, iv. 491, 492
Longinus, the critic, disciple of Ammonius Saccas, i. 504; his time and character, iv. 202, 203; put to death by Aurelian, i. 624; speaks honourably of the lawgiver of the Jews, iv. 203; whether he has mentioned the apostle Paul, 204; a curious observation upon one of his fragments, received from Mr. Merrick, *ibid.*
Lord's Day, mentioned by Commodian, ii. 73; and by Gaudentius, Bp of Brescia, 524; appointed to be a day of rest by Constantine, 339; esteemed a festival by the early Christians, 431 to 434
Lord's Prayer, delivered but once, i. 512; how read by Origen, 565, 566; the doxology wanting in some copies, 513, 566. See Matt. vi. 13, in the list of *various readings*.
Lowman, (*M.*) quoted, iii. 451, v. 386, note. 419
Lowth, (*W.*) corrected, i. 546; quoted, v. 397, 403
Lucanus, said by Origen to have corrupted the scriptures, i. 563
Lucian, presbyter of Antioch, his history, ii. 109 to 111; his editions of the Seventy and of the New Testament, 109, 111, 112, 116; his martyrdom, i. 627, ii. 110, 111; his apology for the Christian religion, 110, 113, 114; a creed ascribed to him, 114; his opinion upon the doctrine of the Trinity, 115; many of his disciples Arians, 116; his character, *ibid.*; said to have been a favourer of Paul of Samosata, or Sabellianism, i. 627; his apology quoted, iv. 60
Lucian of Samosata, his time and works, iv. 149; a passage from him concerning Peregrinus, in which is a copious testimony to the Christians of his time, 150 to 152; his account of Alexander, who set up an oracle in Paphlagonia, 152; passages from his *True History*, wherein there seem to be allusions and references to the book of the Revelation, 152, 153; extracts from the Dialogue Philopatris ascribed to him, where are references to the Revelation and other books of the New Testament, 153 to 156
Lucifer, Bp of Cagliari, his history, works, opinions, character, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 449 to 451
Lucius, Bp of Rome, his history, ii. 42, 43
Lucius, Arian Bp at Alexandria after Athanasius, ii. 318
LUKE (ST.) THE EVANGELIST, his history from the New Testament, iii. 187; who he was, his profession and country, ii. 371, 380, 406, 418, 548, 550, 552, 553, 602, 604, 605, 630; iii. 39, 86, 87, 96; whether the same as mentioned Col. iv. 14. iv. 521, 605, 630; and Rom. xvi. 21, iii. 32. Testimonies of ancient writers to his gospel and the Acts, iii. 188 to 191. Remarks upon those testimonies, shewing that he was not a painter, nor a slave; doubtful whether he was a Syrian; was a physician and a Jew by birth, and an early believer, though not one of the seventy; may be the same as Lucius of Cyrene; was a writer of two books divinely inspired, a companion of Paul, and acquainted with the other apostles, 191 to 199; his character, 202 to 203, 7 note [1]; not certain that he died by martyrdom, 199

The time and place of his writing, ii, 470, 488, 550, iii. 75, 86, 87, 90, 91; his gospel and the Acts written, A. D. 63, or 64, 199, 200; he wrote his gospel in Greece, 200 to 202

He wrote a gospel and the Acts, according to *Irenæus*, i. 366, 367; and Clement of A. 399, 400; and Tertullian, 419 to 422; his gospel referred to by Justin M. 344; by the martyrs at Lyons, 361; upon what grounds his and St. Mark's gospels were received by Papias and Clement of A. 339, 398, 399; by Irenæus, 376, 377; Tertullian, 420, 421; his gospel said to be Paul's, 420; said by Origen to have been written for Gentile converts, 532; written more especially for Gentiles, ii. 553; for all in general, 602; the occasion of writing his gospel, ii. 229; the third evangelist wrote a gospel, and the Acts his second book, 371, iii. 51, 52

Observations upon his gospel, chiefly the Introduction, iii. 203 to 206. See also 155 to 157. A Letter from Dr. Morgan (writer of the Moral Philosopher) and Dr. Lardner's answer concerning the first chapter of his gospel, v. Observations upon The Acts of the Apostles, iii. 206 to 212; alterations in his gospel by Marcion, iv. 611 to 616. See *Four gospels*.
Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene, i. 13, 14, 18
Lysias, his good character, i. 40, 104, 122; his post and power at Jerusalem, 58, 104, 122

M

Maccabees, those books how quoted by Cyprian and others, ii. 29, 30; not a part of the Jewish canon, according to Origen, i. 556; not received as canonical by Jerom, ii. 540, 541; nor by Rufinus, 573; see 579; nor by Gregory, Bp of Rome, iii. 69; see also 80; the first book accurate history, the second not so, v. 467. Inquiry into

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the truth of the history of the seven brothers in the second book, 467 to 472
Machærus, John the Baptist said to have been beheaded there, iii. 534, 536; how taken by the Romans, 528
Macknight, (Dr.) quoted and commended, iv. 238 in the notes, v. 184, 459, 460, 484
OBSERVATIONS upon DR. MACKNIGHT'S HARMONY, so far as relates to the history of our Saviour's resurrection, v. 522 to 543; concerning the time of the application to Pilate for a guard to the sepulchre, 522, 523; the visit to the sepulchre attempted by some of the women, 524 to 528; their preparation of the spices, 528 to 531; their journey to the sepulchre, and the appearances of our Lord on the day of his resurrection, 531 to 543
Macrina, Basil's grandmother, i. 598, 605
Macrobius quoted, i. 183, 184; was a heathen, *ibid.* and iv. 392, 393; his time and works, 392; his testimony to the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem, 393, 394; what he says of Numenius, 205
Macrobius, a Donatist writer, ii. 299
Madaura, the correspondence between the people of that place and Augustine, iv. 489 to 491
Maffei, (*Scipio*) rejects the fragments ascribed to Irenæus, i. 376; quoted, iii. 61, 62
MAGDALEN HOUSES, a Letter to Jonas Hanway, Esq. on this subject, v. 459 to 464; *Mary Magdalene* not the woman mentioned, Luke vii. 37, 459 to 461; not only most protestants are of this opinion, but also the learned Benedictine editor of Chrysostom's works and Du Pin, 463. It was not Mary the sister of Lazarus, 462. A book referred to, entitled Thoughts on the plan for a Magdalen house, 464, note
Magians, or wise men from the East, did not find Jesus in a stable but in a house, iii. 88
Magic often imputed to Heretics, ii. 513, 514, 559; what makes a magician, 514
Maimonides quoted, v. 395
Majorinus, first Bp of the Donatists at Carthage, ii. 295, 297
Malala, an historian of no great credit, iv. 30
Malchion, presbyter of Antioch, his history, ii. 74; remarks upon it, 75; he directed in the council of Antioch, when Paul of Samosata was deposed, 75, 76; his opinion upon the doctrine of the Trinity not certainly known, 76; his testimony to the scriptures, *ibid.*; he convicted Paul of Samosata, i. 621, 623, 624
Mamertinus, his panegyric upon Julian, iv. 315, 316
Mammæa, mother of the emperor Alexander, sends for Origen, i. 523; said to have been a Christian, iv. 179
Man, his excellence, according to the Manichees, ii. 194, 195; how made, *ibid.*; said by them to have two souls, *ib.*
MANI, his history and doctrine, from Socrates, ii. 140, 141; was put to death by a king of Persia, 142, 144, 166, 168; the anniversary of his death kept by his followers, 142, 207; his dress, 143; lived under several kings of Persia, 142; his name and his parents, 163 to 165; whether he ever was a slave, 165; his qualifications, 165, 166; believed antipodes, 166; the accounts given of him by Eastern writers, and remarks upon them, 166, 167; his time, 168 to 170; his predecessors, 170, 171; his works, 171 to 175; the genuineness of a saying ascribed to him disputed, 175; his followers had many large books, *ibid.*; his opinions, 176 [and see *Manichees*]; his pretensions, and whether he was an impostor, 177 to 179; reasons for thinking him an impostor, with remarks, 179 to 182; additional observations, 183 to 186; called himself apostle, 181; his three chief disciples, 150, 151; whether he had twelve disciples, 180
MANICHEES, passages of ancient authors concerning them, ii. 139 to 144; authors, who wrote against them, 144 to 148; they were in many places, but not numerous, 144, 148; eminent men among them, 149 to 155; their ecclesiastical constitution, with an account of their *Elect*, and *Auditors*, 155 to 158; their manners vindicated from aspersions, 158 to 160; how they were persecuted, 161, 162; their opinions in divers points the same as those of other Christians, 176, 177; their belief of the divine perfections, 186, 187; they believed God to be almighty, but denied his immensity, 187; whether they believed two gods, *ibid.*; they believed God creator, and a consubstantial trinity, 187, 188; whether they worshipped the sun, 188; they believed two principles, 188 to 191; supposed the creation of the world to be occasional, 191, 192; their account of the creation of the world, and the formation of man, 191 to 194; they condemned marriage, 195; whether they held free will, 196, 197; believed the transmigration of souls, 198; denied the resurrection of the body, *ibid.*; believed a future judgment, 199; whether they believed the eternity of hell torments, *ibid.*; their true character, 184, 185, 235; vindicated from charges brought against them, 240 to 243; their notion of Christ, see the word *Christ*; their worship, see *Worship*; their doctrine concerning the scriptures, see *Scriptures*.
Manichæism, the time of its rise, ii. 140, 168 to 170; its character, 184, 185, 235; form of abjuring it, 153
Manton, (Dr. *T.*) quoted, v. 321
MARC; his time, country, and sect (called *Marcosians*), iv. 577; accused of magical arts, 578; observations on the accusation, 579; the Marcosians unjustly accused of being Docetæ, and holding two principles, *ibid.*; Irenæus's account of their opinion of Christ hardly intelligible, 580; they received the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, believed the facts recorded in the gospel, and practised baptism and the Lord's supper, 580 to 582; what books of the New Testament they acknowledged, and their apocryphal books, 582
Marcella, wife of Porphyry, her character, iv. 210
Marcella, mother of Potamiæna, and martyr at Alexandria, in the time of Severus, iv. 166
Marcellinus, Ammianus, his time, and work, and character, iv. 371, 372; extracts from his history, 372 to 374; his character of Constantius, 373; of Julian, 374, 375, 378; of the Christian religion, 373; his account of Julian's design to build the temple at Jerusalem, 325, v. 44; his credulity, iv. 328, 329
Marcellus, sent into Judea by Vitellius, i. 49
Marcellus, Bp of Apamea, in Syria, his remarkable zeal in demolishing heathen temples, iv. 473 to 475
Marcellus, an eminent Christian in Mesopotamia, ii. 143; whether the letter from Mani to him be genuine, *ibid.* 174
Marcellus, Bp of Ancyra in Galatia, a Sabellian, i. 598; how treated by Eusebius, ii. 359; his time, opinions, character, and testimony to the scriptures, 395 to 397
Marcia, concubine of Commodus, said to have been favourable to the Christians, iv. 186
Marcian, Bp of Arles, favoured the Novatians, ii. 53
Marcian, a Novatian Bp, and a learned man, ii. 54, 55
Marcianus, to whom Irenæus inscribed one of his works, i. 364
MARCION, what Polycarp said to him, i. 325. See the contents of his chapter in vol. iv.; a general account of him from Irenæus, iv. 588, 589; and Epiphanius, 590, 591; the time in which he lived, 589, 590; Epiphanius is suspected of inventing the story of his deceiving a young woman, 591, 592; his opinions, his notion of the Creator, and distinction between good and just, 594 to 598
The character of Marcion, what books of the New Testament were received by him, and how he treated them, iii. 357 to 361, 462 to 464, iv. 610 to 624. Rejected the Old Testament and the God of the Jews, 608 to 610; the genealogy and baptism of our Saviour, 611, 612; the Acts of the Apostles, 617; the epistles to Timothy, Titus, and the Hebrews, and the Catholic epistles, i. 424, iv. 618;

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and the Revelation, i. 420. He received the epistle to Philemon, i. 424; his New Testament consisted of two books, a Gospel (that of Luke) and an Apostolicon, ten Epistles of Paul, and these altered, 367, 420, iv. 611, 617; his alterations in Luke's gospel, 611 to 616; in the ten epistles he received, 618 to 623; asserted that the epistle inscribed to the Ephesians was sent to the Laodiceans, i. 423, iv. 622

Authors who wrote against Marcion: Justin M. i. 342; Dionysius of Corinth, 352; Theophilus of Antioch, 383; Philip, Bp of Gortyna, in Crete, 439; Irenæus and Modestus, *ibid.*; Bardesanes, 441, 442; Tertullian, 419; Hippolytus, 495, 496

Marcionites (*The*) were numerous, iv. 594; they were Necessarians, yet believed a future judgment, and that the souls of the virtuous would be happy, 598, 599; they admitted the miracles and principal facts recorded of our Saviour, and his death and resurrection, 603 to 605; they believed that Christ was not a real man, 601, 602; nor the Christ foretold by the Jewish prophets, 603; their manners were virtuous, and they had many martyrs, 606; they extolled virginity, 606, 607; they had public worship and ordinances, 607, 608; they were charged with corrupting the scriptures, i. 352, 420, 430, 431, 563; an argument hence in favour of the authenticity of the New Testament, iv. 624

Marcionite woman, a martyr in Valerian's persecution, iv. 196

Mariamne, the second daughter of Herod Agrippa, i. 16; divorced her first husband and married the Alabarch of Alexandria, 47, 213 note [c]

Marinus, the remarkable history of his martyrdom in Cæsarea in the time of Gallienus, iv. 199

Marinus, successor of Proclus, in the chair of philosophy at Athens, in 485; and author of the life of Proclus; extracts from that life, iv. 419 to 421; his native country, 423

MARK (ST.) THE EVANGELIST; his history from the New Testament, iii. 175, 176; from other writers, 176, 177; whether he was John Mark, and nephew to Barnabas, ii. 551, 603, 626, iii. 84, 86, 174, 175, 179; said to be one of Christ's seventy disciples, ii. 406, 418; is said to be a companion and disciple of Peter, i. 338, 368, 394, ii. 367, 418, ii. 551, 603; a fellow labourer of Paul, according to the Constitutions, ii. 438; for a while he attended Paul and Barnabas, iii. 175; was acquainted with Peter and other apostles, *ibid.*; was with Paul at Rome, 176; probably was with Peter afterwards, *ibid.*; said to have been Peter's interpreter, or that Peter dictated the gospel of Mark, i. 339, 420, 532, ii. 367, 548, 550, 551, 552, 560, 603, 604. The occasion, time, and place of writing it, i. 337, 338, 339, 395 to 399, ii. 367, 368, 470, 488, ii. 551, 603, 606, iii. 51, 74, 75, 86, 91; it was written at Rome about the year 64, iii. 181, 182; testimonies to it with a view of ascertaining the time of it, and the evangelist's station and character, 178 to 180; remarks on these testimonies, 180, 181

His gospel referred to by Justin M. i. 344; received by Archelaus, ii. 139; by Titus of Bostra, 147. He is said by Augustine to have followed Matthew as an abridger, ii. 583, 584; which sentiment is examined, 584; he has things omitted by Matthew and Luke, 626, 627. Observations on his gospel, from which it is evident that he did not epitomize St. Matthew, iii. 184 to 186, 245 to 249

He is said to have been the first Bp of Alexandria; by Jerom, ii. 550, by John Cassian, iii. 18; buried at Alexandria, according to Jerom, ii. 552. The first commentary upon his gospel, 625, 626 See *Four gospels*

Mark, a Novatian Bp in Scythia, ii. 55

Mark, a magician of Egypt, ii. 499

Marriage, condemned by the Manichees, ii. 195, 196, 198.

Marriages, Second, condemned by the Novatians, 49, 50.

Marshal (*N.*) quoted, ii. 8, 21, 22, 30; his edition of Cyprian's works in English commended, 10; corrected, 24.

Martial, his time and writings, and testimony to the fortitude of Christians, iii. 615, 616

Martin, Bp of Tours, reproves Ithacius, and intercedes with the emperor for the Priscillianists, ii. 501; his judgment concerning the right manner of treating Heretics, 501, 506, 511; he petitions that tribunes may not be sent into Spain to try Heretics, 506; his opinion concerning the salvation of the fallen angels, 538

Martyrs, how respected by the Novatians, ii. 50; cruel sufferings endured by them in Diocletian's persecution, 118 to 120; divers, who suffered with Pamphilus, or near his time, 119; spoken of as intercessors, iii. 4; excessive respect shewn them, 15

Martyrs at Lyons, a large account of their sufferings, iv. 82 to 91; remarks upon that history, and the uses of it, 91 to 95; whether they had among them gifts of the spirit, 94.

Marullus sent into Judea by Caligula, i. 49

Mary, our Lord's mother, the same as the mother of James and Joses, iii. 87, said to be of the tribe of Levi, ii. 229; see i. 460; why she went to Bethlehem at the time of the assessment, 147; died in Judea, and did not go with John to Ephesus, iii. 219; how aspersed by the Jews, 488, 553

Other Maries, three of that name at the foot of the cross of Jesus, ii. 476; Mary Magdalene, Mary sister of Martha and Lazarus, and the woman that was a sinner, supposed to be all one, iii. 72; according to Theophylact there are four Maries in the gospels, 87. See *Magdalen houses.*

Mary, a woman of good condition in Jerusalem, who killed her child for food in the siege, iii. 518, 568

Massada, the remarkable siege and surrender of that place, iii. 528

Massuet, the Benedictine editor of Irenæus, quoted, iii. 461, iv. 519; and often elsewhere

Maternus, (*Julius Firmicus*) his history, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 408

Matter, what powers the Manichees ascribed to *it*, *ii. 190*, 191; names by which they called it, 187, 189

MATTHEW (St.) APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST, was also called Levi, ii. 550, 551, 626, iii. 157; said by St. Mark to have been the son of Alpheus, 158 note [l]; his history, 157 to 159; testimonies of ancient writers to his gospel, 150 to 161; seems to be referred to by Barnabas, ii. 289; by Clement of R. 293 to 294; see 302; by Hermas, 306, 307; referred to in the second epistle ascribed to Clement of R. 303; referred to by Ignatius, 316; by Polycarp, 328; in the epistle of the church of Smyrna, 333; referred to by Athenagoras, 378; by Theophilus of Antioch, 384; received, and said to have been written in Hebrew, by Papias, 338; by Irenæus, 365; see also 390; received by Justin M. 343, 344; said by Origen to be universally received, the first written, and delivered to the Jewish believers in Hebrew, 532; received by Archelaus, ii. 139; what Faustus says of it, 211, 213; it was of great authority and universally received, 213

Remarks upon the testimonies for discovering the true time of it, iii. 161 to 163; characters of time in the gospel itself, 163, 164; it was written in Judea, or near it, in 63, 64, or 65, p. 163; see also 155; when it was written, according to Eusebius and others, ii. 388, 389; the time, according to Irenæus, and said by him to have been written for the Jews, i. 365; there was a Hebrew gospel in the time of Hegesippus, 357; said by Cosmas to have written the first soon after the death of Stephen, at the request of the Jewish believers, before he left Judea to go abroad, iii. 51; compare that with what is said by the author of the *Imperfect Work*, 65; supposed by Isidore of Seville, to have been written about eight years after our Lord's ascension, 76; to the like purpose Theophylact, 86; and

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Euthymius, 89; but Nicephorus says about fifteen years, 91; said by Epiphanius to have written first, because he had been a publican, that sinners might have encouragement to repent, ii. 417, 418; to the like purpose another writer, iii. 65.

The language in which it was written, iii. 165 to 167; the opinion that it was written in Hebrew examined, i. 338; whether Origen was of that opinion? 573, 574. This evangelist, as Eusebius says, having first preached to the Hebrews when he was about to go abroad to other people, delivered his gospel to the Hebrews in their own language, ii. 368; written in Hebrew, according to Cyril, of Jerusalem, 410; and Epiphanius, 417; said, in the Synopsis ascribed to Athanasius, to have been written in Hebrew, published at Jerusalem, and translated into Greek by St. James, 405; by St. John, iii. 87, see 89; written in Hebrew, according to Augustine, ii. 583; and Chrysostom, 603; and Isidore, iii. 74; compare that with what is said by the author of the Imperfect Work, iii. 65; whether written in Hebrew, and the sentiments of divers learned moderns about it, ii. 390, 391; said by Jerom to have written his gospel in Hebrew, in Judea, for the use and at the request of the Jewish believers, 550, 551; his Hebrew gospel said by Jerom to be in the library at Cæsarea and at Beræa, 120, 551; nevertheless he did not consult it when he corrected the Latin version before in use, 569.

How Matthew quotes texts of the Old Testament, ii. 551, 568, 569; the beginning of his gospel quoted by Isidore, iii. 8; Theodoret, 12; and Cosmas, 52. A Commentary upon this gospel, called *The Imperfect Work*, 62; the occasion, design, and character of this gospel, according to the same, 65; this gospel was received by the Nazaræan Christians, 485. It is not certain whether this evangelist died by martyrdom, 158 note [h], 159. A Letter concerning the omission of our Saviour's ascension by St. Matthew and St. John, i. p. xxxviii, xxxix

The first chapter of this gospel quoted by Justin M. i. 344; Tertullian, 421, 422; Novatus, ii. 60, 61; the second chapter referred to by Ignatius, i. 317; Hegesippus, 356; in the Sybilline verses, 452, 453, 454; by Victorinus, ii. 93; the first and second acknowledged by Cerinthus, iv. 570

Matthias, his Traditions, how quoted by Clement of A. i. 410; and see *Gospel*.

Maturus, one of the martyrs at Lyons, iv. 86, 88

Mavilus, a martyr in Africa, in the time of Severus, iv. 167

Maxentius favours the Christians, and gives them liberty in Africa, ii. 297, 333

Maximian Herculius, put to death by Constantine's order, ii. 326

Maximilla, a Montanist prophetess, the time of her death, i. 489; a report concerning the manner of it, 491

Maximin, Bp of Antioch, successor of Theophilus, i. 414

Maximin I. *or the Thracian*, his time and persecution, iv. 186, 187; his persecution said to be local, and of the Christian clergy only, *ibid.*; nevertheless it may have been general of all clergy every where, 300; and at the same time there was a persecution of other Christians in Pontus and Cappadocia, 187

Maximin II. his letter to Sabinus in favour of the Christians in 312, iv. 288, 289; his fuller edict in favour of the Christians in 313, p. 292

Maximin, an Arian bishop, ii. 318

Maximus, an ecclesiastical writer of the second century, i. 413

Maximus, Bp of A. after Dionysius, i. 613

Maximus of Madaura, the correspondence between him and Augustine, with remarks, iv. 466 to 468

Maximus, the philosopher, and favourite of Julian, his history and character, iv. 453

Meir, an eminent Jewish rabbi, iii. 550, 551

Melancthon quoted and commended, v. 300

Melania, how commended by Palladius, ii. 535

Melchisedechians, supposed to be a branch of the Theodotians, followers of Theodotus the banker, iv. 662

Meletians, their time, i. 129, 130

Meletius, his character not rightly given by Athanasius, i. 129 to 131

Melito, Bp of Sardis, his history and testimony to the scriptures, i. 358 to 360; his catalogue of the books of the Old Testament recited, ii. 545; his apology quoted, iv. 52, 53

Melmoth, (Mr.) his translation of Pliny's Epistles quoted, iv. 13, 23

Menoch, a Manichæan woman, i. 174

Mensurius, Bp of Carthage, ii. 296, 297

Merrick, (*J.*) a curious observation upon a fragment of Longinus, communicated by him to the author, iv. 204

Messiah, or *Christ*, the ground and reason of that character, v. 426 to 429; the expectation of his coming general in the time of our Saviour, iii. 504, 505, 589; that Jesus is the Messiah, 593

Methodius, Bp in Lycia, his history, ii. 98 to 100; omitted by Eusebius, 98; and why? 101; testimonies to him, 102; his martyrdom, 100; his works, 100, 101; he wrote against Origen, 98, 99, 101; against Porphyry, 98, 100; select passages from him, 103; charged with Arianism, and other errors, 103 to 105; whether he was a Millenarian? 104; preferred to Origen, without reason, 102; his testimony to the scriptures, 105 to 107

Metras, a martyr at Alexandria, before the publication of Decius's edict, iv. 192

Michaelis (*J. D.*) quoted, v. 408 note [b]

Middleton (Dr.) quoted, with disapprobation, iv. 551.

Mill, (*J.*) what books of the New Testament he supposes to be owned by Clement of Rome, i. 303; his opinion concerning a various reading of Rom. chap. i. in Clement's epistle, 296; and his quotation of Matt. xxv. 41, p. 295; concerning Tatian's altering St. Paul's expressions, 354; concerning a reference in Theophilus, of Antioch, to Acts xv. 20. p. 385; says that Clement of A. distinguishes apocryphal books from canonical, 407; that Tertullian did not place the epistle of St. James in the canon, 429, quoted, 499, 500, 501, 507, 565, i. 647, ii. 14, 18, iii. 100 note; quoted and commended, ii. 218, 231

Millenarians, their opinions, i. 614, 639, 640, iii. 44

Millennium, expected by Commodian and many orthodox Christians, i. 641, ii. 73; by Lactantius, ii. 277; crude notions of it embraced by some, 459, rejected by others, 477, 479 See iii. 44

Miltiades, author of an apology for the Christian religion, and other works, i. 383

Ministerial office, (The) its value, according as it is performed, iii. 599

Minucius Felix, his history and character, i. 477, 478; his testimony to the New Testament, 479

CHRIST'S MIRACLES, the design of them, v. 339; the evangelists did not record them all, 337, 338; they aimed at brevity in relating them, 341; a summary account of them in Arnobius, iv. 249, 254; in Lactantius, 283, 284; in Eusebius, 365; were healing and beneficial, iii. 55. See the word *Woolston*

Miraculous gifts and powers said to be in the church, after the times of the apostles, i. 336, 436, 468. ii. 253, 268, 366, 408, 472, 487, 617, iii. 13, 59. See likewise the chapter of Gregory, Bp of Neocæsarea, i. 592, 594, 606; and Dionysius of A. 610, 611; Cyprian, iii. 9; and large extracts relating to this from Chrysostom, 617. See also iii. 13, 67, 73. Accounts of miracles in church history not always to be relied upon, iv. 331, 332; miracles had ceased, iii. 66, 67, 73, 81

MISHNA, the time and author of that work, iii. 547, 548; extracts out of it, 550 to 552

Moderation commended, especially in great men, iv. 53

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Moderation, (*Christian*) not understood by Greg. Nazianzen, ii. 471; nor by Amphilochius, 473, 474
Moderation of Christians to be known to all men; a sermon, v. 297
Modestus, an ecclesiastical writer of the second century, i. 439
Mæragenes, wrote memoirs of Apollonius Tyanæus, iv. 256, 259, 260
Moine, (*A. le*) quoted, v. 397, 408, 427
Mole's (*T.*) letter concerning Dæmoniacs, v. 475 to 477
Monasteries, approved by Basil, i. 599; disliked by the Neocæsareans, 606
Monks mentioned with great dislike by Julian, iv. 346, by Libanius, 360, 361, 365, by Eunapius, 382, 383, and by Rutilius, 395
Montanism, the time of its rise, i. 360, iv. 669. *Several who wrote against it:* the churches of Vienne and Lyons, i. 360, 361; Serapion, Bp of Antioch, 414; Cl. Apollinarius, 439, 440; Apollonius, 479; Caius, 482; Asterius Urbanus, 489, 499. How described by Firmilian, 577; two parties among them, 579; they were numerous, and subsisted a good while, iv. 669; probably some were in the Unitarian or Sabellian scheme, 672; were very strict, fasted much, and condemned second marriages, 673; would not re-admit those who had been guilty of great sins after baptism, 673, 674; and were Millenarians, 674; the accounts of their mysteries, a mere calumny, 674, 675; their testimony to the scriptures, 675.
MONTANUS, the place of his birth, and the reproaches cast on him, iv. 670; his companions and their prophecies, 670 to 672; a report concerning the manner of his death, i. 491
Montfaucon, (*Bernard*) his opinion of the Synopsis Scripturæ, and the Clementine Homilies, i. 472; censured, i. 272; quoted, 336; his opinion of Eusebius's Arianism, 362; his opinion concerning Marcellus considered, 396; his figures of the gems called *Abraxei* examined, iv. 549 to 551; it is wonderful that he did not perceive they were of Pagan origin, 551
Moon, see *Sun and Moon*
Moore, (*T.*) quoted, v. 417
Morris, (*J.*) his sermons referred to, v. 412 note
Mosaic account of the creation, and of the fall of man, v. 446 to 458
Moses, a martyr at Rome, ii. 44; the time of his martyrdom, 51
Mosheim (*J. L.*) quoted and commended, ii. 272, iii. 251, 374, 433, 434, 606, 609 notes; his account of the Christian Agapæ, or love feasts, iv. 24.; some of his observations upon Pliny's epistle concerning the Christians, criticised, 27, 28, 31 to 33, 40 note [a]. His observations upon M. Antoninus commended, 76; and upon his deliverance in Germany, and the Thundering Legion, 104 to 106; his account of the persecution of Severus examined, iv. 168 to 170; his observations upon the martyrdom of Maximus, 199; upon the edict of Valerius Maximian in favour of the Christians, 283, 284; upon Dioclesian's persecution, 293 to 294; and upon the Christianity ascribed to Philip, 188; receives the *Philosophy of Oracles*, as written by Porphyry, 238; allows that in the lives of Pythagoras, written by Porphyry and Jamblichus, he is set up as a rival with our Saviour, 269 note [n]; his opinion concerning a disturbance caused in the church by Ammonius and others, rejected, 238; his fine observation, shewing the obscurity of Apollonius Tyanæus, 260, in the notes. His observations upon the story of the cross appearing to Constantine, 329; upon the treatment given by Constantine to Gentile people, 438; upon the conduct of Christian Magistrates afterwards, 496; and upon Dr. Warburton's *Julian*, 326, note [l]
Moyle, (*Walter*) commended, i. 477; his observations upon the history of the thundering Legion quoted with approbation, iv. 98, 102, 103, 106, and note [a]; his opinion concerning the age of Lucian and his station, iv. 149; and concerning the age of the Dialogue called Philopatris, 153
Municipal places, their privileges, and that they could not inflict capital punishments, i. 43
Musæus, a Jewish writer mentioned by Anatolius, iii. 78
Musanus, an ecclesiastical writer, i. 439
Musonius, *Bp of Neocæsarea*, his great character from *Basil*, i. 600; another *Musonius* of that city, 594

N

Narcissus, *Bp of Jerusalem*, his great age, and other things concerning him, i. 445, 446, 492
Natalis, a remarkable history of him, i. 486, 487
Nathanael, learned, as well as sincere, ii. 611
Nativity, see *Jesus*
Nazaræan Christians, their opinion concerning Christ, ii. 235, note [d]; iii. 483; v. 387, 388, and notes; and the observance of the rites of the Mosaic law, iii. 483, 484; received St. Paul and all the apostles of Christ, and all the books of the New Testament, iii. 483 to 485, note [b]; they subsisted in the fourth and fifth centuries, 485; v. 388
Nazarite, his vow, i. 114, 115
Nebuchadnezzar, two computations of his reign, i. 194
Nectarius, an honourable Gentile, who interceded for the people of Calama, when they had transgressed the Imperial laws, iv. 479
Neocæsareans, their character, i. 597, 598, 606; said to have been Sabellians, 598, 599, 600; defended themselves by the writings of their first bishop, Gregory Thaumaturgus, 599
Nepos, *an Egyptian Bp and Millenarian*, his writings and character, i. 614, 615, 633, 634
Nero permits the wall raised by the Jews in the court of the temple to remain, i. 101; the first emperor who persecuted the Christians, 107; his persecution, the time of it, iii. 283, 284; testified, by Tacitus, 611; Sulpicius Severus, 612; Martial, 615; Juvenal, 616, 617; and Suetonius, 619; the time of his death, 511; supposed by some ancient Christians to be antichrist, ii. 91, 94, 95; an inscription concerning the Christians in his time, iii. 608
Nerva, favourable to the Christians according to Dion Cassius and Orosius, iv. 185; did not resign the empire to Trajan, i. 199.
Nestorius, his opinions, and how treated by Cassian, iii. 18
Nestorius, high priest of Greece, how he saved Athens by worshipping Achilles with Minerva, iv. 414
Nethinims, who they were, v. 490
Nevita, made consul by Julian in 362, his character, iv. 315
New Testament, see *Testament*
Newton, (Sir *Isaac*) an examination of his opinion concerning the time of the Revelation, and St. John's banishment into Patmos, iii. 222 to 225
Nice, *(The council of)* ii. 336; the occasion of it, 348; convened by Constantine, 348; the number of bishops present, 348, 349; were chiefly of the eastern part of the Roman empire, 349; who presided in it, *ibid.*; it's time and duration, *ibid.*; whether the bible was placed before them, *ibid.*; the points debated by them, with their creed, and epistle and canons, 350; did not compose any catalogue of the books of scripture, *ibid.*; the creed signed by almost all the bishops, *ibid.*; their sentence upon Arius, *ibid.*; judgments of ancients and moderns upon this council, 350, 351; their several decisions, with remarks, 351 to 354
Nicephorus, *patriarch of Constantinople*, his Stichometry, iii. 47 to 49
Nicephorus Callisti, his time, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 90 to 92

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Nicolaitans, Hippolytus wrote against them, i. 496
Nicolas, one of the seven deacons, divers opinions concerning him, i. 497
Nicolas of Damascus, his character, and his embassy to Augustus, i. 152, 156; was intimate with Herod, 157, 162; magnified the success of his embassy, 191
Nitocris, her good character, iv. 224
Noah, (The precepts of) v. 495; observations upon them, 495 to 498
Noetus, his time, history, and opinions, i. 581 to 586; many of the same sentiment, 583 to 585; the holy scriptures received by them, 585, 586; *for his time see also* ii. 59
Nonnus, his paraphrase of St. John's gospel, iii. 5
Noris, (Cardinal) quoted and commended, i. 19
Novatianism, it's rise, and the concern which Dionysius of Alexandria had with it, i. 613
NOVATIANS, condemned second marriages, ii. 49; baptized such as came to them from the Catholics, 50; their respect for martyrs, *ibid.*; their sufferings from the Arians, 54; numerous in several countries, 55; favoured by Fabius, Bp of Antioch, and Marcion, Bp of Arles, 52; how treated by Constantine, 53; by Julian, 54; by Theodosius, *ibid*; by Cyril of Alexandria, 57; by Innocent and Celestinus of Rome, *ibid.*; texts of scripture alleged by them as favouring their sentiment, concerning the treatment of great sinners, 63; their sentiments concerning the holy scriptures, 65. Eminent men among them, whose names may be found at the proper places in this Index: *Ablabius, Acesius, Agelius, Chrysanthus, Eusebius, Leontius, Marcion, Mark, Paul, Rusticola, Sisinnius, Sympronian, Theopemptus*. That Socrates and Sozomen were not Novatians, 57
Novatus, or *Novatianus*, presbyter of Rome, ii. 133; reckoned among those called Heretics, i. 527, 626; his episcopal ordination, ii. 42; Cornelius's account of it, 43, 44; remarks upon that account, 44 to 47; the first antipope, 41; sends letters and deputies to foreign churches, *ibid.*; the time of their arrival at Carthage, 52; he is said to have suffered martyrdom, 47; his peculiar opinion concerning the treatment of such as had lapsed, i. 613; ii. 48; the time of his taking up that opinion, ii. 50 to 52; said to be orthodox upon the Trinity, 49, 54; his works, 57; the time of writing his treatise of the Trinity, or of the rule of faith, 58; his character, 60, 61; his testimony to the scriptures of the New Testament, 61 to 65; that his name was Novatus, and not Novatian, 43, 68, 69, 132 to 135
Novatus, presbyter at Carthage, said to be the chief author of the schism at Rome, but without reason, ii. 51, 52, 134, 135
Numenius, a Pythagorean philosopher, was well acquainted with the books of Moses and the prophets, and has allegorized some parts of them; but his time is uncertain, and he has not referred to any books of the New Testament, iv. 205 to 207
Nye, (Stephen) mistakes of his concerning the Manichees, ii. 177, 222

O

Oath taken by the Jews to Cæsar and Herod, i. 153; was the same with St. Luke's enrolment, 153 to 156, 158, 159
Obodas, king of Arabia, differences between him and Herod, i. 151; succeeded by Aretas, *ibid.*
Oecumenius, his time and works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 83 to 85
Olympiodorus, author of a Roman history, his time, work, and extracts from it, and its character, iv. 396, 397
Olympius, some time prime minister to Honorius, his character from Zosimus, iv. 411
Olympius, a learned and zealous Gentile at Alexandria, iv 470 to 472
Onesimus knew St. Paul before he came to him at Rome, iii. 351
Onesiphorus, at what time he came to St. Paul at Rome, iii. 305
Ophians, or *Ophites*, an account of them from Irenæus, Theodoret, Epiphanius, and others, iv. 655; Origen's account of them, with observations, 656, 657; can scarce be considered as Christian heretics, 657.
Optatus, of Milevi, his time and character, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 491, 492; was of opinion that every man is born with an unclean spirit, i. 570, 571.
Oracle, a fictitious heathen oracle in 398, foretelling the period of the Christian religion, iv. 476
Order of Heretics, iv. 511; in Irenæus, Epiphanius, Philaster, and Augustine, 534, 583
Oribasius, physician to Julian, his history and works, iv. 386, 387
ORIGEN, see the contents of his chapter, i. 519; went to Rome, 521; allowed his homilies to be taken down in writing, 524; his confessions and sufferings, *ibid.*; see also, iv. 192; his quotations of Phlegon, 59, 60, 61; what Porphyry says of him, 213; the number of his works, i. 524, 525; what of them now extant, 525, 526; testimonies to him, 526, 527; his character, 528; select passages from him, 528 to 531; his testimony to the scriptures, 532 to 575, and to our Saviour's unblemished character, in his works against Celsus, iii. 554; refers to a passage in Josephus concerning John the Baptist, 534, 535; how he quotes Josephus, as ascribing the destruction of Jerusalem to the sin of the Jews in putting James to death, 538; did not receive any books as sacred scriptures, beside those in the present canon, i. 549 to 562, and 574; his work against Celsus much esteemed, iv. 216, 255; quoted, 527, v. 335, 392, 393; his Greek text amended in two places, i. 541, 572, note [h]; commended by Anatolius, ii. 78; Victorinus of Pettaw made use of his commentaries upon the scriptures, 94; an edition of his Septuagint by Pamphilus and Eusebius, 111, 121; his commentaries transcribed by Pamphilus, 117; Methodius and others his adversaries, 102; his great eminence, 122, 123; how commended by Jerom, in the early part of his life, and how he spake of him afterwards, 536, 537; his peculiar opinions, 537 to 539; his catalogue of the books of the Old Testament recited, 545; his opinions, and his works condemned by a Synod at Alexandria, 623, 624; some account of his *Tetrapla* and *Hexapla*, i. 447; his account of the Heretics, Apelles, iv. 645; the Basilidians, 554, 555; Elcesaites, 682; and Ophians, 656, 657; what Porphyry writes of his having been educated in the heathen principles confuted, i. 519, 520; iv. 213
Another Origen, i. 520
Origenists, an obscure sect mentioned by Epiphanius, i. 589
Original sin, v. 457, 458; not mentioned by Titus of Bostra, in his arguments with the Manichees, ii. 147; asserted by Gregory, Bp of Rome, iii. 72
Orosius, his memoir concerning the Priscillianists, ii. 511, 512; his wrong account of the origin of Trajan's persecution, iv. 31; his account of the treatment given to Gentile people by Christian magistrates, 437, 493
Earl of Orrery, his Translation of Pliny's epistles quoted, iv. 26, 28, 29
Orthodoxy, Christians more orthodox in later ages than in the primitive times, ii. 59, 82, 105, 278
Ossens, nearly the same as the *Elcesaites*, which see. Called also Sampsæans, iv. 683, 684
Owen, (Dr. *J.*) quoted, v. 376, note [a] 472

P

Pacatus, his panegyric quoted, ii. 503, 507
Pacian, Bp of Barcelona, his time and works, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 490, 491

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Pagi, (Ant.) commended, i. 94; his judgment, upon the Constitutions, ii. 424; upon the Christianity of Philip, i. 190
Palestine, a description of that country, iii. 388, 389
Palladius, author of the Lausiac history, his character of Jerom, and reflections upon him, ii. 534, 535
Palladius, author of a dialogue of the life of Chrysostom, his time, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 4, 5
Palmas, Bp in Pontus, and writer in the second century, i. 439
PAMPHILUS, *presbyter at Cæsarea*, his friendship with Eusebius, ii. 116; his life written by Eusebius, 118; a library erected by him at Cæsarea, 116, 120; which was destroyed before the middle of the seventh century, 122; said to have set up a school or academy at Cæsarea, *ibid.*; his apology for Origen, 117, 122; his edition of the *Seventy*, 121; said to have composed summary contents of the book of the Acts, 123; probably received the epistle to the Hebrews, 121; his affection for the scriptures, which he encouraged men and women of every condition to read, 119, 123, 124; his martyrdom, 117, 118; his excellent character, 118, 119, 124; Remarks upon spurious *Acts of his passion*, 124, 125
Pan, a fabulous story concerning his death, in the time of the emperor Tiberius, iii. 606, 607
Pandects, whether there are now in them any laws against the Christians, iv. 180
Pantænus, master of the catechetical school at Alexandria, his history, and testimony to the scriptures, i. 390, 391; commended by Alexander, Bp of Jerusalem, 493
Papias Bp of Hieropolis, his history, character, work and testimony to the books of the New Testament, i. 336 to 341
Papinian, an observation upon his conduct, iv. 170, 171
Parker, (*S.*) his Observations upon Philostratus's Life of Apollonius Tyanæus, iv. 269, 271 to 275
Parmenian, Bp of the Donatists at Carthage, author of a writing against the Catholics, answered by Optatus, ii. 299
Passovers, how many in our Saviour's ministry, iii. 242, 243
Patriarchs, (The) how reviled by the Manichees, ii. 210
Patrick, (Bp) quoted, v. 386, 398, 424
Patripassians, the Sabellians and others so called, i. 583 to 585
PAUL (ST.) THE APOSTLE, his history before his conversion, and his general character, iii. 251, 252, 480; the place of his birth, ii. 555, 556; a Roman citizen, and how he came to be so, i. 123 to 125

The time of his conversion, iii. 251 to 254; his age at that time, 258 to 259; observations upon his conversion, and the circumstances of things at that time in Judea, 255 to 258; ii. 618; his conversion not the cause of the rest of the churches in Judea, i. 55; when he was made an apostle, iii. 259 to 263; received the whole doctrine of the gospel immediately from heaven, iii. 13

The HISTORY of his travels and preaching, to his coming from Damascus to Jerusalem the first time after his conversion, iii. 262 to 264; to his being brought to Antioch by Barnabas, 264 to 266; to his coming up to Jerusalem with the contributions of the Christians at Antioch, 266 to 268; to his coming to the council at Jerusalem about the year 49, 268 to 271; to his coming to Jerusalem A. D. 58, when he was apprehended and imprisoned, 272 to 279; his vow, i. 114; his imprisonment and prosecution in Judea, 37 to 39; the manner of his imprisonment, 126 to 128; sent to Rome a prisoner that he might not be soon expelled as a Jew, ii. 611; his HISTORY, to the end of his imprisonment at Rome, iii. 279 to 281; to the time of his death, 281 to 284; the time of his imprisonment at Rome, ii. 556; of his martyrdom, *ibid.*; was beheaded at Rome, A. D. 64 or 65, i. 426, 482; iii. 283, 284; came with Peter from Corinth, from whence they went to Rome, and suffered martyrdom about the same time, i. 352, 353; in Nero's general persecution, ii. 622; iii. 15, 35, 40, 76

Whether he really blamed Peter for his conduct, mentioned Gal. 2, iv. 232; v. 519 to 521; wrought miracles at Athens and at Rome, though not related by St. Luke, iii. 211; uncertain whether he ever went into Spain, iii. 232; there is no good reason to believe that he ever was in Spain or Britain, 281. St. Paul much commended by Origen, i. 535; Chrysostom, ii. 602, 613; Isidore, iii. 8; Theodoret, 12, 13; Cassian, 18; Cosmas, 52; Gregory, 70; his eloquence celebrated by Photius, though he has many elliptical expressions, 83; character of his style, by Irenæus, i. 369; by Origen, 532, 573; by Jerom, ii. 570 to 571; vindicated against the reflections of Porphyry, iv. 229 to 234; he was rejected by the Ebionites, or some of them, i. 472; iii. 483; but received by other Jewish believers, called Nazarenes, 484, 485; how treated by the author of the Recognitions, i. 470, 471, 472

His fourteen epistles, their chronology, iii. 285 to 291; all received by Origen, i. 533, 535 to 538, 574; were in the library at Cæsarea, ii. 121; received by Archelaus and Mani, 139; the Manichees, 213, 215; the Paulicians, 238, 239; generally received in the time of Eusebius, 369, 370, 381, 395; received by Athanasius, 400, 401; in the Synopsis ascribed to him, 404; by Cyril of Jerusalem, 410; Epiphanius, 417; the author of the Apostolical Constitutions, 438; Gregory Nazianzen, 470; Amphilochius, 473; Ebedjesu, 488; Theodore, Bp of Mopsuestia, who also wrote Commentaries upon them, 527. Commentaries likewise were written upon them, by C. M, Victorinus, 453; and Diodorus of Tarsus, 517; received by Jerom, 548, 549, 556; the council of Carthage, 575; Rufinus, 573; Augustine, 578, 585; Chrysostom, 601, 602; Severian, Bp of Gabala, 620; Innocent of Rome, 628; Paulinus of Nola, 629; Theodoret, iii. 11; Cosmas, 51, 52; Euthalius, 39, who also published an edition of them, 38; are in the Alexandrine M. S. 45, 46; received by Isidore of Seville, 74; a Commentary on them by Sedulius, 32, and as is supposed by Primasius, 33; received by Cassiodorus, 61; Oecumenius, 84; Theophylact, 86

His epistle to the Romans and several other of his epistles referred to by Clement of Rome, i. 296 to 300; his first epistle to the Corinthians quoted by the same Clement, 293; and by Hermas, 414; his epistle to the Ephesians quoted by Ignatius, 316, 318 to 320; his first epistle to the Corinthians, and his epistles to the Philippians and the Thessalonians, quoted by Polycarp, 327, 328, 329; several of his epistles referred to by Hermas, 308, 309; by Ignatius, 318 to 321; by Polycarp, 329 to 331; see 336; by Justin M. 346 to 347; see 349; by the author of the epistle to Diognetus, 349 to 351; by the martyrs at Lyons, 361, 362; by Athenagoras, 379 to 381; by Theophilus of Antioch, 385 to 388; twelve or thirteen of his epistles received and quoted by Irenæus, 368 to 369; see 371, 372; all received and quoted by Clement of Alexandria, except the epistle to Philemon, 400, 401; all received by Tertullian, except the epistle to the Hebrews, 422 to 424, 427, 428; how many were received by Tatian, 353 to 355; the author of the Testaments of the twelve patriarchs, appears to have received the book of the Acts, and St. Paul's epistles, 463, 464; all rehearsed by Caius, except that to the Hebrews, 481; several of his epistles quoted by Firmilian, 576, 577; all quoted by Cyprian, except the epistle to Philemon, and that to the Hebrews, which he did not receive, ii. 20 to 24, 30; several of his epistles quoted by Novatus, 62, 63; by Commodian, 73; Anatolius, 78; the author of the poem against the Marcionites, 93; Victorinus, 96; Methodius, 105; whether the epistle to the Hebrews was received

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by Eusebius, 372, 373, 381, 382; it was doubted of by some, particularly the church of the Romans, 370, 473; iii. 74; whether written in Hebrew, ii. 391, 392; a commentary upon thirteen of the epistles by Pelagius, 630; when first divided into sections and chapters, 39, 45

The order of his epistles in point of time, ii. 606, iii. 11, 39, 46, 47, 52, 58, 61

A *forged book* entitled The *Travels* of Paul and Thecla, rejected and condemned, i. 435; an apocryphal book called *Acts of Paul*, quoted by Origen, but not received by him as of authority, 555

Paul's Revelation, rejected by Sozomen and the ancients, ii. 388

Paul of Concordia, a Letter of Jerom to him, ii. 443; told Jerom that Cyprian used to call Tertullian his master, i. 417

Paul of Samosata, Bp of Antioch, his history, i. 620 to 623; favoured by Zenobia, 623; his opinions, 623, 625 to 628; had a considerable number of proselytes, 627; scriptures received by him, 628; his works, *ibid.*; his character, *ibid.*; said to have judaized, 626

Paul, a Novatian Bp at Constantinople, ii. 56

Paul, a learned Persian, ii. 59

Paula, Jerom's friend, how commended by Possidonius, ii. 535

Paulianists, their baptism, i. 627, 628; their continuance, *ibid.*

Paulicians, their history and time, ii. 238; reduced their sect to six churches, 158; changed their first names for others, *ibid.*; how they called their ministers, 238; their testimony to the scriptures, 238, 239

Paulinus, Bp of Nola, his time and works, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 629, 630

Pausanias, his testimony to the destruction of Jerusalem by a Roman emperor, iii. 532

Peace (the) of the churches in Judea. See *Rest*

Pearson, (*Bp*) a remark of his upon Clement of Rome, i. 294; upon Ignatius, 323; his opinion concerning the time of Polycarp's martyrdom, 326; concerning the Constitutions, 456; quoted, iii. 600, 606; v. 374 note, 429; censured, iii. 316; quoted and commended, 345, and elsewhere

Pierce, (*J.*) quoted, iii. 349, 357; v. 374 note, 378 note, 391, 393; with disapprobation, 313 to 315

Pelagius, his time and works, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 630 to 632; sometimes confutes the Manichees, ii. 148; quoted, v. 392, 416, 428

Pelagianism, how described by Cassian, iii. 18; how treated by Vincentius Lirinensis, 24

Peregrinus, called also *Proteus*, said by Lucian to have been some while among the Christians, and afterwards to have parted from them, iii. 150; his death mentioned by several ancient writers, 151

Perennis desired Apollonius to plead before the Roman senate, i. 444

Perizonius, his interpretation of Luke ii. 1, 2. represented and considered, i. 165 to 171

Perpetua, a martyr, i. 578; with Felicitas in the time of Severus, iii. 167

Persecution, or force and compulsion in things of religion, condemned by our blessed Saviour, iv. 497; by the Abp of Canterbury, 498; by Tertullian, Lactantius, Athanasius, Constantine, Jovian, Valentinian, Julian, Themistius, Libanius, Ammianus Marcellinus, 498, 499; by De Maussac, a learned Dominican, v. 332; every degree of it may fill our minds with horror, iv. 294; arguments against it in Lactantius, and that Christians did not persecute, ii. 273 to 275; condemned by Athanasius, 399, by the Christian religion, 471; all persecution condemned by Sulpicius Severus, ii. 623, 624; makes heresies spread faster than otherwise they would, *ibid.*; how defined by Socrates, iii. 93. On the subject of prosecuting the writers against Christianity, see Dr. Waddington, Bp of Chichester's correspondence with Dr. Lardner, i. p. xxxv to xxxvii. A general account of the heathen persecutions, ii. 623; the number of heathen persecutions of the Christians, iv. 298, 299

PERSIA, the gospel first preached there by the apostle Thaddeus, iii. 55; many churches there, *ibid.*; the cruelty of a persecution endured there by the Christians, and the happy alteration made in the manners of those of them, who embraced the Christian religion, 15; the Christian religion preached there before the time of Mani, ii. 234; before the council of Nice, 348; before the time of Eusebius, 365; the time of a persecution there, 346

Pestilence in the Roman empire, and the time of it, ii. 6

Petavius quoted, ii. 422 note [e], 432, 433, 434

PETER (ST.) THE APOSTLE, his history to the time of our Saviour's ascension, iii. 388 to 392; he and his brother Andrew said to have been the first two disciples called by Christ, 6. His history to the council at Jerusalem, 392 to 403; after which he goes to Antioch, where he is reproved by St. Paul for dissimulation, 403, 404, iv. 231, 232; his travels to the time of his coming to Rome, 404 to 406; said to be at Rome in the time of Claudius, 76; his history from Jerom, ii. 560; preached to the Jews in Pontus and Bithynia according to Eusebius, ii. 371; was often in those countries according to Epiphanius, 419; the time of his death, iii. 406; the manner of his death, 408, 409; was at Rome and suffered martyrdom there, 409 to 416; came to Rome in 63 or 64, and suffered martyrdom in 64 or 65, p. 154, 284, 404 to 406; suffered martyrdom at Rome together with Paul, in the time of Nero according to Eusebius and Dionysius of Corinth, i. 353; according to Tertullian, 426; and Caius, 482; and Theodoret, iii. 15; was at Antioch, afterwards in Pontus, and at Rome in the time of Claudius, and suffered martyrdom with Paul in Nero's general persecution, ii. 622; iii. 15, 35, 76; in the last year of Nero, 79; the place of his interment, ii. 560

Concerning his episcopate at Antioch, iii. 407; said to have been bishop of Rome twenty-five years, *ibid.*; Rome Peter's province, according to Ephrem, ii. 487; his children, iii. 407; his wife's martyrdom, 408; his absconding at Rome, *ibid.*; the manner of his crucifixion, 408, 409; the prerogatives of this apostle, 391 to 393; miracles wrought at Jerusalem by his shadow passing by, 393, 394; much commended, iii. 12; his preeminence, 35, 36, 70, 83; he and the apostle Paul are expressly mentioned by Hierocles, iv. 255, 257, 261.

HIS TWO EPISTLES, their genuineness shewn from testimony and internal characters, iii. 414 to 416; to whom they were sent, 416 to 419; whether sent to Jews or Gentiles, ii. 478, 560, 587, 626; iii. 23, 59, 61, 62, 71, 79, 84; the place where they were written, 419 to 423; the first epistle written at Rome, ii. 626; iii. 43, 90; at Babylon in Persia, iii. 53, 55; the time when they were written, 423. Remarks on 1 Pet. v. 13, iii. 424, 425

His first epistle seems to be referred to by Clement of Rome, i. 302; referred to by Polycarp several times, 331, 332; by the martyrs at Lyons, 362; received by Theophilus of Antioch, 385, 388, 389; quoted by Papias, 340, 341; Irenæus, 570; Clement of Alexandria, 403; Tertullian, 429; universally received in Origen's time, 532; quoted or referred to by Victorinus, ii. 97; Methodius, 106; universally received, 369, 383.

Both his epistles received by Athanasius, ii. 400, 401; Cyril of Jerusalem, 410; the council of Laodicea, 415; Epiphanius, 417, 419; Innocent, Bp of Rome, 628; Pelagius, 631; Cyril of Alexandria, iii. 9; Prosper, 21; Salvian, 36; Gregory, Bp of Rome, 70, 71; the author of the Imperfect Work, 66.

The second epistle seems to be referred to by Clement of Rome, i. 302; quoted by the author of Questiones et R. 343; by Adamantius, ii. 407; generally received at Alexandria, 478; quoted by Ambrose, 495; by the author

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of the Commentary upon thirteen of St. Paul's epistles, 521; received by Jerom, 560

The second epistle not quoted by Papias, i. 310; nor by Irenæus, 370, 372; nor Tertullian, 429, 430; doubted of in the time of Origen, 532; how quoted by him, 539, 540; whether received by Firmilian, 577, ii. 25; not quoted by Cyprian, 25; whether referred to by Novatus, 64; or Methodius, 107; not universally received in the time of Eusebius, 369, 383; doubted of by some in the time of Didymus, 478; not received by the churches of Syria, 488 to 490; not received by Chrysostom, 602, 607; doubted of by some, iii. 59, 71, 74; because of the difference of the style, ii. 560; iii. 74

Both his epistles probably received by the Manichees, ii. 216; both rejected by the Paulicians, 289. See *Catholic epistles*

The Gospel, Acts, Preaching, Judgment, Revelation, and other books ascribed to Peter, rejected by Jerom, ii. 560, 574 See *Acts, Gospel*

PETER's *Preaching*, or Preaching of Peter and Paul, how quoted by Clement of Alexandria, i. 408, 409; when written, 410 note [a]; quoted by Heracleon, and rejected by Origen, 554, 555; called likewise by him, *Doctrine of Peter*, 554; censured by the author of *Rebaptizing*, ii. 39; how quoted by Lactantius, with remarks, 291; rejected in Eusebius, 370, 387; and Jerom, 560; that it was not received as a canonical book by Clement of Alexandria, see i. 555

Peter's Revelation; short notes written upon it by Clement of Alexandria, i. 394; how quoted by him, 410; rejected by Eusebius and the ancients, ii. 370, 388; and by Jerom, 560

Peter, Bp of Alexandria, his history, works, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 127 to 129

Peter of Sicily, his work against the Manichees, and his time, ii. 153

Petilian, a Donatist bishop, ii. 300

Petronius, president of Syria, ordered by Caligula to erect his statue at Jerusalem, i. 49, 54; his precept to the magistrates of Doris in favour of the Jews, 96

Pfaff (*C. M.*) Fragments of Irenæus published by him, and remarks upon them, i. 375; quoted, iii. 465

PHARISEES; their principles and practices, i. 66 to 68; their power under Alexandra, 66; that title appropriated to men of substance and learning, 69, 119; six thousand of them refuse to swear to Cæsar and Herod, 119, 153; their great authority among the Jews, 119, 153

Phedimus, Bp of Amasea, ordains Gregory Thaumaturgus, i. 593

Pheroras, inquiries into the occasion of his death, i. 187

Pheroras's wife misrepresented by Josephus, i. 155

Philaster, Bp of Brescia, what he says of some catholics omitting to read publicly the epistle to the Hebrews, ii. 64; his time and work, and testimony to the scriptures, 522, 523; his article concerning the Abstinents, with remarks, 516, 517; he wrote a long treatise of heresies, and yet has not been reckoned orthodox by all, iv. 513; he thought that the soul was created before the body, and that the doctrine of the Millennium is a heresy, *ibid.*; his account of the Heretics, Apelles, 643, Cerdon, 587, Cerinthus, 570, Leucius, 626; the Montanists, 675

Phileas, Bp of Thmuis in Egypt, and martyr, ii. 126, 127

Phileleutherus Dubliniensis. See *Bentley*

Philemon, converted by St. Paul, iii. 351, 365; his character and station, 323, 324, 365, 366; Paul's epistle to him, when and where written, 323, 324; quoted by Origen, i. 535; not quoted by Cyprian, ii. 29; received by Marcion, iv. 617, 618; rejected by some, ii. 557

Philip, tetrarch of Iturea, in the time of John the Baptist, i. 11, 12; married to Salome, Herodias's daughter, 212

Philip, otherwise called *Herod*, first husband of Herodias, his history, i. 212; was a private person, 215

Philip, said to be the apostle, lived and died at Hierapolis in Phrygia, and wrought miracles there, and his daughters prophesied, i. 335, 336, 337; v. 401

Philip, Bp of Gortyna in Crete, i. 439

Philip the emperor, whether he was a Christian, iv. 188 to 191

Philippi, oratory there, by the river's side, i. 61

Philippians, (*the epistle to the*) when and where written, *iii.* 321, 322

Philippus Sidetes, his account of Athenagoras and Pantænus, i. 377, 390

Philo, the Jew, says, that Pilate dedicated shields at Jerusalem, i. 185; speaks of four sons of Herod living in the time of Pilate, 214; mentioned by Anatolius, ii. 78; his divisions of the books of the Old Testament, 544

Philopatris, a Dialogue so called, its age, and extracts from it, with remarks, iv. 153 to 155

Philoromus, receiver-general at Alexandria, and martyr in Dioclesian's persecution, ii. 126

Philosophers, their timorousness in declaring the truth, ii. 597; their credulity, and that they did little to improve the sentiments of mankind, iv. 271

Philostorgius, his time and writings, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 318, 319; his character, 111

Philostratus, his testimony to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, iii. 530, 533; his Life of Apollonius Tyanæus, with remarks, and that he did not aim to set up Apollonius as a corrival with our Saviour, though Hierocles and other heathens afterwards made that use of it, iv. 260 to 271, 271 to 275

Phlegon, his time and works, iv. 58; supposed to speak of our Saviour's foreknowledge, *ibid.*; was credulous, *ibid.*; a passage in which he is supposed to speak of the miraculous darkness at the time of our Saviour's passion, with notes and observations, 59 to 68; how quoted by Dr. Clarke and Grotius, 60

Photinus, his history, ii. 443, 444; opinions, 444 to 446; writings, 446; character, *ibid.*; scriptures received by him, *ibid.*; the continuance of his sect, 447

Photinians, sometimes called *Bonosiacs*, or *Bonosians*, *ii.* 447; not allowed to hold religious assemblies, *ibid.*; mentioned by Augustine as in being in his time, *i.* 627

Photius, his character of the epistle of Clement of Rome, i. 290 note [a]; his censure of Irenæus, 365; of Clement of Alexandria, 394; his account of the genuine and supposititious writings of Clement of Rome, 473; his time, and books against the Manichees, ii. 153; his manner of treating them, 148; his time, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 81 to 83; quoted and commended, v. 10

Pierius, presbyter of Alexandria, fragments supposed to be his, though ascribed to Clement Apollinarius, i. 441; his history, ii. 84 to 86; said to have been a catechist, 85; how he speaks of the Trinity, 86; his copies of the Bible, 81; his character, 84, 86

Piety, the virtue and benefit of early, a sermon, v. 106

Pilate, (*Pontius*) his unjust government in Judea, i. 43; stood in fear of the Jews, 43, 52; was in Judea at the commencement of John the Baptist's ministry, 202; at Jerusalem at the time of our Saviour's crucifixion, 79, 82; his wife in Judea, 80; the duration of his government, 48, 49, 202; when he came into Judea, and when removed, 202, 203, 204; remarks upon his power in Judea, 86; of what kind his fear mentioned in John xix. 8, 83, 84; brings Roman ensigns into Jerusalem, 84; dedicates shields there, 85; would have brought water thither with the sacred money, *ibid.*; his Acts, and Letter to Tiberius, iii. 599 to 606; made away with himself, i. 205

Pilgrimages, disliked by Gregory Nyssen and Jerom, ii. 476

Pin, (*E. Du*) his character of Novatus, ii. 61; his character of Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, 359; of Eusebius himself, 363; his judgment concerning the Constitutions, 423, 424

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Pinytus, Bp of Gnossus in Crete, i. 439
Pionius, an excellent martyr, learned men are not agreed about the time of his martyrdom, i. 580
Piso, præfect of Syria, i. 176; his delays in going to Rome after his removal, 205
Piso (*Lucius*) when made præfect of Rome, i. 195 to 197
Plato quoted, v. 420
Pliny, the Elder, his time and character, and whether he refers to the blindness inflicted by St. Paul upon Elymas the sorcerer in Cyprus, iii. 609
Pliny, (*the Younger*) the time of his provincial government, iv. 11, 12; his Letter to Trajan concerning the Christians, 13 to 15; rehearsed with notes and observations, 15 to 28; Trajan's Rescript rehearsed with notes and observations, 29, 30; observations of learned men upon Pliny's Letter and Trajan's Rescript, 30 to 33; the uses of those epistles, and general observations upon them, 39 to 43; Pliny's character and his amiable qualities, 34; was credulous and superstitious, 35, 36; his want of equity toward the Christians, 18, 19, 27, 28; perverted many, 18, 21, 22; condemned them without law and authority, 20, 28, 29; examined by torture two Christian women then in years, 25, 26; was zealous for the honour of the gods and priesthood, 27
Plotina, wife of Trajan, commended, iv. 39
Plotinus negligent in observing the sacred rites of Gentilism, iv. 200
Plutarch, his dialogue concerning the cessation of oracles quoted, iii. 606, 607; whether he knew any thing of the Christians, or their affairs, iv. 204, 206; his judicious observations upon the fabulous stories common among the Greeks, 266; quoted, iii. 513
Plutarch, brother of Heraclas, scholar of Origen, and martyr, i. 520
Polycarp, Bp of Smyrna, his time and history, from Irenæus, i. 325, 326; ordained by apostles, 326; his great age and martyrdom, *ibid.*; wrote several epistles not now extant, *ibid.*; in his epistle to the Philippians, his only remaining work, he quotes or refers to the first epistle of St Peter, and divers other books of the New Testament, 325, 327 to 333; how he is quoted by Irenæus, 374, 375; the *Responsiones*, ascribed to him, not his, 327. *The relation of his martyrdom*, with notes and observations, 327; iv. 82 to 84; extracts out of it, containing their testimony to the scriptures of the New Testament, i. 333, 334; quoted, v. 402
Polycrates, Bp of Ephesus, his history, and testimony to the scriptures, i. 412, 413; his story concerning St. John's wearing on his forehead a golden plate examined, ii. 554, 555
Pompey, the time of his conquest of Judea, and taking Jerusalem, and his behaviour there, iii. 492
Pomponia Græcina, a Roman lady, accused of a foreign superstition, (supposed to be Christianity) in the time of Nero, A.D. 57, iii. 610
Ponticus, a young man, martyr at Lyons, iv. 89
Pontius, deacon at Carthage, his history, and testimony to the books of the New Testament, ii. 31
Pontius Pilate. See *Pilate*
Popular preaching, how censured by Jerom, ii. 571
PORPHYRY, *the philosopher*; his time, and history, and works, iv. 209, 210 to 213; why he was called Bataneotis, 210; he never was a Christian, 211; his books against the Christians ordered to be destroyed, 111, 212; what he says of Bardesanes, i. 442, 444; of Ammonius, 503; his passage concerning Origen, with remarks, 520, 527. iv. 213, 214; was well acquainted with the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, 234; his objections against the book of Daniel, 214 to 223; remarks upon these objections, and upon the answers to them, 223 to 225; passages, in which he acknowledges the antiquity of Moses, 226; his objection against Gen. iii. 5, p. 226. Texts in the New Testament objected against by Porphyry, Matt. i. 11, 12, p. 227; iii. 3, p. 228; ix. 9, p. 227. xiii. 35, p. 227; xiv. 25, p. 228; xxiv. 15, *ibid.*; xxvii. 45, *ibid.*; John vii. 8, 10, p. 229; Acts v. 1 to 14, p. 230; Gal. i. 15, 16, *ibid.*; ii. 11 to 14, p. 230 to 233. A review of his testimony to the books of the Old and New Testament, 234; passages concerning Christians and their affairs, where also are extracts from a letter of Augustine, with six questions containing difficulties taken from Porphyry, 234 to 237; a work entitled *The Philosophy of Oracles*, ascribed to him, and shewn to be spurious, ii. 361. iv. 238 to 250; his Life of Pythagoras, with remarks, and that it was not written with a design to compare Pythagoras with Jesus Christ, 269, 270; his books against the Christian religion, answered by Methodius, ii. 98, 101, 357, and Apollinarius, 456, 457
Porphyry, servant of Pamphilus, his martyrdom, ii. 124
Posidonius, what he said of Jerom, mentioned by Palladius, ii. 535
Posthumian, chief speaker in a dialogue of Sulpicius Severus, ii. 537, 623
Potamiæna, a virgin, martyr at Alexandria in the time of Severus, iv. 166
Pothinus, Bp of Lyons, and predecessor of Irenæus, his age and sufferings, i. 360, 363, 364. iv. 87.
Potter (*J.*) his Greek antiquities quoted, iv. 174
Præsens, see *Bruttius*
Prætextatus, a Roman of great distinction, an oration in his praise by Himerius, iv. 349; how he jested with Damasus Bp of Rome, 377, 378; commended by Ammianus, 377. See likewise 406, 466
Praxagoras, his history of Constantine, and great character of him, iv. 309, 310
Praxeas, our knowledge of him chiefly from Tertullian, iv. 676; his time and country, *ibid.*; was persecuted, and once signed a recantation, 677; strenuous asserter of the divine unity, and believed the general articles of the Christian faith, 677, 678; denied that the Father or the Divine nature in Jesus suffered, 678, 679; received both the Old and New Testament, 679, 680.
Prayer in the name of Christ, a sermon, v. 218; the apostles never prayed, nor mentioned blessings, as given for the sake of Christ, 225, 226
Preaching of Paul or Peter, an apocryphal book censured by the author of a work entitled Of Rebaptizing Heretics, ii. 39
Preaching of Peter quoted by Lactantius, ii. 291
President, this title used in a general way, i. 171, 209
Presidents of provinces, had power of life and death, i. 42, 43; were supreme judges in all causes in their provinces, 46; had a council with them, 59; their good conduct toward persons of different religions, 101 to 103
Prideaux (Dr.) his opinion concerning the survey at the time of our Saviour's nativity considered, i. 138, 139; his remark upon Herod's cruelty, 181; quoted and commended, 71, 216; his account of the Mishna and Talmuds, iii. 548; his judicious observations upon Porphyry's explications of the book of Daniel, and upon his objections against that book, iv. 220, 223, 224; his judgment upon the Sibylline oracles, i. 450; quoted, iii. 78. v. 460, 470
Priests and Levites, Christian ministers not so called in early times, ii. 430
Primasius, an African Bp, his Commentary upon St. Paul's epistles quoted, iii. 33
Primus, Bp of Corinth, i. 357
Prince, when used absolutely, equivalent to emperor, i. 197
Principle, meaning of this word, iv. 595.
Priscian, governor of Palestine, to whom Libanius writes, ii. 144
Priscillian, his writings, ii. 497; history of him, and his prosecution and death, 498 to 500; an apology for him and his friends, 502 to 511; his character, 502, 503.

Digitized by Google

Priscillianism, the time of its rise, ii. 498
Priscillianists, scriptures received by them, ii. 511 to 513; their opinions concerning other matters, 511 to 514; charges against them in Jerom, Augustine and Leo, considered, 514 to 516
Prisoners, how kept by the Romans, i. 127; sent from Judea to Rome, 129; delivered there to the captain of the guard, *ibid.*
Proæresius, a Christian and sophist, professor of rhetoric at Athens, iv. 383, 385
Proclus, president of the school of philosophy at Athens, author of a treatise against the Christians, and many other works, iv. 418
Proclus or *Proculus*, a Montanist mentioned by Tertullian, i. 417, 482, 580; with whom Caius had a conference at Rome, 482, 483; his history and work against the Valentinians, 580; several of that name, *ibid.*
Procopius, writer of the History of Justinian, and a Christian, iv. 428
Procula, daughter of Elpidius and Eucrocia, ii. 500, 503
Proculus, said to have wrought a remarkable cure by anointing with oil, iv. 165, and note [h]
Prodicus and his followers, an account of them from Clem. Alexandrinus and Theodoret, with observations, iv. 571 to 573; accusations against them, 573, 574; respected Christ and the scriptures, 574; their time and general character, *ibid.*; did not separate themselves from other Christian churches, 575
Prodigies, preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, according to Josephus, iii. 518 to 522; according to Josippon, 568, 569; according to Tacitus, 613, 614
Promise annexed to godliness, two sermons, v. 267
Prophets, the origin of that character, signs whereby they may be known, and the great guilt of neglecting the messages of true prophets, iii. 577 to 580
Prophets of the O. T. how far they speak of Christ, iii. 8; they wrote the canonical books of the Old Testament, ii. 578, 579, 581
False prophets in Judea, before the destruction of Jerusalem, iii. 502 to 504, 519, and see 528
Proselytes, the Jews sometimes proselyted persons of condition, and their different notions about that matter, i. 66 to 68; there was but one sort of proselytes among the Jews, iii. 395 to 400. v. 498 to 504
Prosper of Aquitain, his time, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 20, 21; works ascribed to him, 21 to 23
Protevangelion, or gospel of James, composed by Leucius, iv. 632
Protoctetus, presbyter of Cæsarea, and friend of Origen, i. 522
Provinces, the division of them made in the time of Augustus, i. 20
Prudentius (*A.*) his time and works, a testimony to the scriptures, iii. 3, 4; his character of Julian, iv. 321; his books against Symmachus quoted, iv. 462, 463
Psalms, divided into five books, ii. 474; commentaries upon them by Apollinarius, and several other Greek writers, ii. 455; by Theodore of Mopsuestia, 527; upon some of them by Ambrose of Milan, 496
Publicans, that some Jews were such, i. 120
Publius, Bp of Athens, and martyr, i. 436, 437
Pyle (*T.*) quoted, v. 419

Q

Quadratus, mentioned with evangelists, and said to have had the gift of prophecy, i. 430, 491; whether Quadratus the apologist was Bp of Athens, 436, 437
Quartus, a martyr at Rome in the time of Valerian, iv. 198;
Quesnell (*M. P.*) some observations of his, ii. 511; his opinion concerning some works ascribed to Prosper, i. 21
Question (*The*) or torture used by the Romans, i. 121
Quinta, a martyr at Alexandria, before the publication of Decius's edict against the Christians, iv. 192
Quotations, many books are quoted by ancient Christian writers, without giving them authority, ii. 559, 573; how texts of the O. T. are quoted by the writers of the N. T. 564, 568, 569
Remarkable *quotation* of Judges, xiv. 14, iv. 145; Phil. ii. 6. iv. 90

R

Rabbi, one baptised at Leyden, v. 58
Readings (*Various*) their number, and the causes of them, i. 563; various readings in Faustus the Manichee, ii. 233
Reason, the value of it according to Irenæus, i. 373; the use of it in things of religion, iii. 81. A future state proved by reason, ii. 268, 269, 270, 360
Recognitions, not written by Clement of Rome, i. 292, 466 to 468; their time, 468; the author an Ebionite, 474, 475; how quoted by Origen, 550; quoted in the *Imperfect Work*, iii. 66
Recommendation of things virtuous, lovely, and of good report; a sermon, v. 137
Redemption of Gentiles as well as Jews, from the curse of the law, v. 264, 265. *Rites of redemption* among the Marcosians, iv. 580, 581
Register; Jewish registers in being at the time of our Saviour's nativity, and afterwards, i. 147
Reimar, (*H. S.*) quoted and commended, iii. 513
Reland (*Adr.*) his observations upon the arch of Titus, and the spoils of Jerusalem, iii. 527
Religion (*Natural*) its reality asserted, ii. 525; the benefit of it, i. 531
Religious parents (The happiness of having) and other relations, a sermon, v. 202; the present advantage of being religious, 272 to 275
Reliques, early instances of translating them, ii. 318, 319
Repentance, its value, ii. 270
Responsiones, a fragment so called, not written by Polycarp, i. 327
Rest: the rest or peace of the churches, mentioned Acts ix. 31, accounted for, i. 54, 55; the time and occasion of it, iii. 252 to 254, 255, 394, 402
Resurrection, the meaning of its being past, i. 449; the resurrection of the body denied by the Manichees, ii. 198, and by the Docetæ and other Heretics, iv. 628, 644; the resurrection of the soul, iv. 620; good arguments for the truth of Christ's resurrection, ii. 360, 615. iii. 7. The history of our Saviour's resurrection, and of his appearances afterwards to his followers digested, v. 531 to 543; this account summed up, 543
Revelation *of St. John*, its genuineness, iii. 447 to 450; written by John the apostle, or John the elder, i. 337; ascribed to Cerinthus by Caius and others, 484, 485; see also 634, 639, 641; not written by Cerinthus, 638. Dionysius of Alexandria, his argument upon it, 634 to 636; with remarks, 636 to 647. Quoted as John the apostle's in the Commentary upon thirteen of St. Paul's epistles, ii. 520, 521
Its time, iii. 450 to 453; said by Victorinus to have been published in the time of Domitian, ii. 97
Referred or alluded to, by Hermas, i. 311, 312; by the martyrs at Lyons, 362; probably received by Papias, 337, 340; received by Justin M. and ascribed by him to John the apostle, 348; received by Melito, Bp of Sardis, 359, by Irenæus, 371; and said by him to have been seen in the time of Domitian; to the like purpose others, ii. 622, iii. 62, 76; received by Theophilus of Antioch, i. 389; Clement of A. 404; Tertullian, 430, 431; a commentary upon it by Melito, 359; made use of by the composer of the Sibylline oracles, 455; received by Apollonius, 481,

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by Hippolytus, 503, by Origen, 532, 533, 541, 542, 574; Dionysius of Alexandria, his argument upon it, with remarks, 634 to 650; received by Cyprian, and the church of Rome in his time, ii. 26, by the author against the Novatian heretic, 35, 36, by the author of a Computation of Easter, 40, 41, by Novatus, 64, 65, by the Novatians, 66, by Commodian, 73, by the author of the poem against the Marcionites, 93, by Methodius, 107; received by the Manichees, 216; quoted by the latter Arnobius, 257; received by Lactantius, 288, by the Donatists, 301; generally received in the time of Eusebius, 373; received by Athanasius, 400, 401, by the author of the Synopsis, 404, by Julius Firmicus Maternus, 408, by Hilary of Poictiers, 413, by Epiphanius, 417, 419, by Faustinus, 451, by Phœbadius, 452, by Victorinus, 97, 454, supposed to be received by Basil, 406, Gregory Nazianzen, 471, Gr. Nyssen, 475, Ephrem, 483; received by Philaster, 523, by the Egyptians, 489, by Pacian, 491, by Ambrose, 495, by Jerom, 548, 549, 555, by Rufinus, 573, by the third council of Carthage, 575, by Augustine, 579, 588, by Sulpicius Severus, 622, by Chromatius, 625, by Innocent, 628, by Paulinus, 629, 630, by Pelagius, 631, by Prudentius, iii. 4; probably by Isidore of Pelusium, 7; received by Cyril of Alexandria, 9, by Cassian, 17, by Prosper, 21, by the author of the Divine promises and predictions, 22, by Salvian, 36, by Gennadius, 41, by Gelasius, 42, by Irenæus, and other early writers, 43, 57, by the Christians in Egypt in the time of Cosmas, 54, and at Constantinople in the ninth century, 54, by the author of the *Imperfect Work*, 66, by Gregory, Bp of Rome, 71, by Isidore of Seville, 74, by Damascenus, 80, by Oecumenius, 85, by Nicephorus Callisti, 91; is in the catalogue of Dionysius, called the Areopagite, 41, in the Alexandrian MS. 45, 46. A commentary upon it by Andrew, 43, by Arethas, 56, by Cassiodorius, 61. Allusions and references to it in Lucian's *True* history, iv. 153, and in the Dialogue called Philopatris, 155

Whether received by Archelaus, ii. 139; *a contradicted* book in the time of Eusebius, 370; whether received by Eusebius, 384 to 386; *not received* by all in the time of Epiphanius, 419; not received by Cyril of Jerusalem, 410; wanting in the catalogue of the council of Laodicea, 415; rejected by some according to Amphilochius, 473; whether received by the Syrians, 489, 490; generally doubted of by Christians in the East, iii. 58; said by Jerom not to be received by the Greeks, ii. 558; not received by all in the time of Augustine, 588; never quoted by Chrysostom, 607; said by Sulpicius Severus to be foolishly or wickedly rejected by many, 622; doubtful whether received by Cosmas, 54, and Theophylact, 88; looked upon as spurious by some of the ancients, 57; not received by Severian, Bp of Gabala, ii. 620; nor by Theodoret, iii. 12; not publicly read at Alexandria in the fifth century, 59; placed among apocryphal books, 48. Sentiments of divers learned moderns concerning this book, ii. 646, 647, 649. See also *St. John*.

Revocatus, a martyr in Africa, in the persecution of Severus, i. 578

Rhadagaisus, a Gothic prince, his remarkable overthrow in the year 405, iv. 479 to 481

Rhenford on the Heresies of the Jews, iv. 511; his account of the *Rites of redemption* among the Marcosians, 580, 581

Rheticius, Bp of Autun, his work and character, ii. 441, 442

Rhetorians, iv. 311

Rhodon, an ecclesiastical writer of the second century, i. 445

Richardson, (*J.*) his opinion, that the apostle Peter authorized St. Mark's gospel, i. 339; quoted again, 374, 403, 431; his dissertation upon Christ's genealogy recommended, 517

Rigaltius (*N.*) his explication of *Authentic letters*, in Tertullian, i. 425

Righteousness, its nature, excellence, and importance, three sermons, v. 79 to 89

River, the Jews wont to pray by a river side, or by the sea-side, i. 61, 62

Roche (*M. de la*) his Literary Journal commended, i. 423. ii. 450; his judgment upon Philostratus's Life of Apollonius Tyanæus, iv. 261; and upon the Lives of Pythagoras written by Porphyry and Jamblichus, 269, and see 271

Roman Empire (*The state of the*) at the end of the third, and the beginning of the fourth century, ii. 323 to 327; the extent of it, and its peaceful state, facilitated the progress of the gospel at the beginning, i. 531

Romans, protected people of all sects and religions, i. 95, 96; Jews in particular, 96 to 98; an objection considered, 107

Romans, the epistle to them difficult, i. 547; when and where written, iii. 297; received by Archelaus, ii. 139, by Serapion, Bp of Thmuis, 146, and the Manichees, 215

Rome, the church there commended, i. 426, 431; founded by Peter and Paul, 374, 420, 425; the succession of the first bishops there, 291, 374; the number of Christians there about the year 250, ii. 44; what authority was assumed by the Bishops of that city, 57; besieged, taken, and sacked by Alaric the Goth, in the year 410, iv. 481, 482

Rufinus, his account of the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, i. 551. ii. 30; he censured the Manichees, 148; published his translation of Origen's books of Principles, 536; his apology for himself, 538; his time, 572; his testimony to the scriptures, 572, 573; his explication of the creed much commended, 572; his character of Porphyry, iv. 296

Ruinart (*Theodoric*) quoted, i. 324; censured, 617, note °; commended, ii. 110

Rusticula, a Novatian Bp at Rome, ii. 57

Rutilius, a martyr in the time of Severus, iv. 438

Rutilius, a heathen, his time and character, and poem, with extracts from it, iv. 394, 395

S.

Sabbath (*The*) how respected by the primitive Christians, and the Constitutions, ii. 432, 433

Sabellianism, its rise and time, i. 616. ii. 131, 132; called Judaism, i. 599, 600, 626; increase of it, and received by many, 619, 620

Sabellians, called Patripassians, but were not, i. 583, 584

Sabellius, his opinions, i. 618 to 620; scriptures received by him and his followers, 620; his time, iii. 57 to 59; mentioned by Methodius, 105

Sabinus, a Gallic prince, his remarkable history, iii. 513

Sabinus, an Arian historian, his time and character, ii. 320

Sacrifice, the Manichees did not think Christ's death was a sacrifice for sin, ii. 205

Sadduc, a Pharisee, associate of Judas of Galilee, i. 119

Sadducees, their principles, and oppostion to the Pharisees, i. 68; were sometimes in public offices, 69; severe in judicial sentences, 45, 68, 69

Salome, Herod's sister, her character, i. 152; always faithful to Herod, 214

Salome, Herodias's daughter, to whom married, i. 212

Salonius, his thoughts of a book called Timothy, written by Salvian, i. 476

Salvian, his answer to Salonius, i. 476; his time, works, and character, iii. 36; his testimony to the scriptures, 36, 37

Samaritans, their respect for mount Gerizim, i. 71; the enmity between them and the Jews, 71, 72; expected the Messiah, and their idea of him, 75

Sanctus, deacon of the church of Vienne, and martyr at Lyons, iv. 86 to 88

Saragossa, a council there concerning the Priscillianists, ii. 499, 508

Digitized by Google

Satan, his original according to the Manichees, ii. 190
Saturninus of Antioch, succeeded Menander, the successor of Simon, an obscure person, whose opinions were similar to those of Basilides, iv. 533
Saturninus, a martyr in Africa, with Perpetua and others, in the time of Severus, i. 578
Saturus, a martyr, i. 578
Sayings ascribed to Christ, which are not exact quotations from the N. T. by Barnabas, i. 289, Irenæus, 375, Clement of A. 411
Scaliger (*Jos.*) his interpretation of Luke ii. 2, i. 173; his observations upon the martyrdom of Polycarp, and the martyrs at Lyons, iv. 84; upon the Letter ascribed to M. Antoninus, relating to the Thundering legion, 100
Scapula (*Tertullus*) when consul at Rome, and proconsul of Africa, iv. 162; how he treated the Christians, 77, 168
Schism defined, ii. 233, note [s]
Scillitan martyrs, in the time of Severus, iv. 167
Scott (Dr. *J. N.*) quoted, v. 192
Scribes, who they were, i. 69, 70
Scripture, that word sometimes equivalent to writing, or treatise, i. 373, 374, 435; how it is used for the books of the Old and New Testament, iii. 137; several sorts of scriptures or writings, canonical, ecclesiastical, and apocryphal, 139, 140
Scriptures, ancient Christian writers sometimes quoted them by memory, i. 330, 333, 386; some heretics endeavoured to corrupt them, 352; general division of them, 636

THE SCRIPTURES.

I. Their authority, and how respected by Clement of Rome, i. 293, 294, by Ignatius, 323, by Polycarp, 332, 333, by Justin M. 343 to 347, by Irenæus, 372, 373, by Theophilus of Antioch, 389, by Clement of A. 405, 406, by Tertullian, 431; publicly read in Christian assemblies, and to be read by all, according to Justin M. 345, 349, Irenæus, 372, 373, Tertullian, 433, 434, the author of the Testaments of the twelve patriarchs, 465; and see Clement of Rome, 293, and Polycarp, 328, 333. Respect for them, 490, 544; doctrines to be proved by them only, 544, 545; to be read by all, and the reading of them much recommended, ii. 119, 124; publicly read, 593; committed to memory, 119, 120; respect for them expressed by Novatus, 65, Commodian, 73, Anatolius, 78, 79, Methodius, 107; respect for them by the Christians in Africa, 293, 294, by Lactantius, 288, 289, by the Donatists, 301, Alexander, Bp of A. 303, the Arians, 310; open to all men, 289, 361; the rule of faith, 394. Scriptures of the New Testament which were universally acknowledged in the time of Eusebius, and before, 369, 370, 372, 373; the scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be read by all, and respect for them expressed by Pamphilus, 119 to 124, Eusebius, 394, Athanasius, 402, 403, the Synopsis, 406, Cyril, 411, Epiphanius, 419, 420, Damasus, Bp of Rome, 465, by Basil, 468, by others, 475, 479, 484, 485, 496; their popular style defended, by Origen, i. 573, by Isidore of Pelusium, iii. 7, 8, by Theodoret, 14. Marks of respect for them, and their high authority in Jerom, ii. 566, 567, and Augustine, 589, 593, publicly read, 593; exhortations to read and study them in Jerom, 567, in Chrysostom, 608 to 610; reading them recommended by Pelagius, 631, Isidore of Pelusium, iii. 7, Theodoret, 12, Eutherius, 20; received and quoted by Heretics, 26, 28, 37

II. Their *general titles and divisions*, i. 636. ii. 147, 219, 220, in Gregory Nazianzen, 471, in Gr. Nyssen, 475; and respect for them in Ephrem, 484, 485; their general titles and divisions in Ambrose, 496, in Rufinus, 573, 574, in Augustine, 588 to 589, in Chrysostom, 608; and marks of respect for them in Severian, 620; general divisions in Sulpicius Severus, 622, in Cyril of A. iii. 9, in Theodoret, 12, Cassian, 17, Leo, 35, Salvian, 36, Cosmas, 54, Facundus, 56, Junilius, 58; tokens of respect for them, their inspiration, and general titles and divisions, in Gregory Bp of Rome, and the reading of them recommended by him and several others, iii. 71, 72. ii. 625, 631. iii. 7, 12, 20

III. Their genuineness and integrity, ii. 593, 594, 602, 603; observations concerning them in Augustine, 596 to 597; how the genuineness of books of the New Testament may be known, 372; several sorts of books, 372, 373; they are occasional writings, 376 to 379; some parts obscure, i. 458, 573; a threefold sense of scripture, 547; whether Christians were from the beginning divided about the books of scripture, 542; their sufficiency as a rule of faith and practice, iii. 25, 28, 42, 54; their integrity, or that the copies of the New Testament have not been corrupted, ii. 228, 232; translated into many languages, 611. See also 594, 595. How disparaged by Vincentius Lirinensis, iii. 24 to 28; mystical interpretations in Gregory, 72

IV. *The Manichæan doctrine concerning the scriptures*, ii. 208; they rejected the Old Testament, 208 to 210; what Faustus says of St. Matthew's gospel, 211, 213; they received the gospels and St. Paul's epistles, 215; they received all the books of the New Testament, 216 to 218; which were publicly read by them, 206; what they said of the books of the New Testament being interpolated, 218 to 220; passages of Faustus concerning that matter, 220 to 222; remarks upon them, 223 to 226; they used apocryphal books, and what, 227, 228 to 230; they did not interpolate the scriptures, 227, 228. See *Versions*.

V. *Books, or texts of scripture, quoted or referred to by Celsus, in his work against the Christians.* He appears to have been acquainted with the books of the New Testament, iv. 116, 117, 132, 133; he has references to all the four gospels, which he allows to have been written by Christ's disciples, 115, 118, 120, 132, 133; and to almost all the facts recorded in the gospels, 120 to 130; he has references to the book of the Acts of the apostles, 130, 134, 135; and to several of the epistles of the New Testament, 119, 120. To be a little more particular: he refers to the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, iv. 116 to 118. He has references to

Matt. i. and ii. Luke i. and ii. p. 116, 120 to 122
Matt. v. 39, and Luke vi. 29, p. 116
Matt. v. 39. vi. 26, 28. Luke vi. 29, xii. 24, 27, p. 117
Matt. vii. 15. xxiv. 24. Mark xiii. 22, p. 117
Matt. ix. 13, p. 117
Matt. xxvi. 39. Luke xxii. 21. John xiii. 26, 28, p. 127. xxvii. 39 to 44. John xix. 28 to 30, p. 127
Mark xvi. 50. John xx. 10 to 18, p. 128, 129
Luke xviii. 9 to 14, p. 117, 118
John xx. 11 to 18, 24 to 29, p. 129
1 Cor. iii. 19, p. 119
viii. 4, 10, 11, p. 120
xv. 22, p. 119. ver. 12, 51 to 54, p. 132
Gal. vi. 14, p. 120
1 Thess. iv. 13 to 17, p. 132
2 Tim. ii. 11, 12, p. 128
1 Pet. ii. 15, 19, 20, p. 120
1 John i. 1. iii. 2. p. 120.

Other testimonies from heathens: See under *Amelius, Hierocles, Julian, Laertius, Longinus, Porphyry*.
Scriptures burnt in Dioclesian's persecution, ii. 293, 294, and 256. iv. 257, 279
Scriptures of the Lord, or *the Lord's Scriptures*, the New Testament denoted by that phrase, i. 352, 372, 405. ii. 452; so likewise *Commentaries*, or *Memoirs*, and *Gospel of the Lord*, meaning the gospels, i. 422
Scythian, said to be predecessor of Mani, his history, ii. 170, 171. See also 140, 141
Sebastian, a Manichee in high offices, ii. 155

Digitized by Google

Sects among the Jews, i. 66 to 71, 119
Secundinus, a Manichæan author, ii. 155; quoted 178, 188
Secundulus, a martyr, i. 578
Sedulius (*Cœcilius*) his time, works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 31; quoted, ii. 407
Sedulius (*Another*) his commentary upon St. Paul's epistles, iii. 32
Selden (*John*) his opinion concerning Annas and Caiaphas, i. 210
Senate of Rome, how they adhered to the ancient rites, according to Zosimus, iv. 408; their petition to the younger Valentinian that the altar of Victory might be restored, 456 to 460; the number of Christians in the senate at that time, 463, 464
Seneca (*L. A.*) *the philospher*, his description of cruel sufferings and punishments, ii. 615, 616; not alleged as a witness to Christianity, 616
Serapion, Bishop of Antioch, his history, and testimony to the New Testament, i. 414, 415; the time of his death, 493
Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis, in Egypt, his history, ii. 145; a saying of his, 146; his testimony to the New Testament, *ibid.*
Serapis, the demolition of his temple at Alexandria, in the year 391, iv. 469, 470
Serena, wife of Stilicho, how reflected upon by Zosimus, iv. 412
Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Cyprus, i. 19
Servius, the grammarian, when he flourished, and taught at Rome, iv. 496
Seth, an apocryphal book quoted in the *Imperfect Work*, iii. 65
Sethians, observations concerning them, iv. 647; Epiphanius's account of them, 648; called themselves the descendants of Seth, *ibid.*; from whom they believed Christ descended, 648, 649; by Christ probably they meant the Holy Ghost, 650; ascribed the creation to angels, 649; what books and scriptures they received, 651
Severian, Bp of Gabala, his time, works, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 619, 620
Severus improved the notions of the Encratites, i. 354
Severus (*Septimius*) emperor, his time, and that for a while he was favourable to the Christians, iv. 165, 166; the date of his edict against the Christians, from Spartian, 168; the severity and duration of his persecution, and the sufferings of the Christians at that time, 166 to 170; they underwent grievous sufferings before the publication of his edict, 169, 301; an observation of Balduinus upon his reign, 166, 170, 171
Severus (*Alexander*) emperor, his time, iv. 177; divers passages from his life, written by Lampridius, shewing his regard to Jews and Christians, 177, 178; and see 295; his mother Mammæa, said to have been a Christian, 179; he is entitled to commendation for his moderation, and the justness of his sentiments, 177, 178
Sextus, an ecclesiastical writer of the second century, i. 413
Sharistani, an Arabian author, ii. 166
Sharpe (*Gr.*) quotes the *Philosophy of Oracles*, as a work of Porphyry, iv. 238
Sherlock (*T.*) *Bp of London*, quoted with respect, ii. 416, 445. v. 421
Sibylline oracles, used by Christians, rejected by the heathens, i. 411, 455; when composed, 450 to 452; how quoted by Clement of Alexandria, 411, 412; by Lactantius, 455; our collection the same, in the main, which was used by the ancient Christian writers, 455, 456; their testimony to divers books of the New Testament, 452 to 454; not esteemed of sacred authority by Lactantius, ii. 290, 291; owe their pretended prophecies concerning our Saviour to our evangelists, iii. 133
Sicarii, or robbers, their character, i. 78
Sign, what sign the Jews required, i. 74
Silas, or *Silvanus*, his excellent character, iii. 425
Silvanus, Bp of Gaza, a martyr in Dioclesian's persecution, ii. 119
Simeon, Bp of Jerusalem, his martyrdom in the time of Trajan, iv. 158
Simeon Beth-Arsam, his time and testimony to Theodore of Mopsuestia, ii. 528; his reflections upon the same, 531
Simon the Cyrenian, that he being transformed suffered instead of our Saviour, an absurd story, iv. 538, 539
Simon Magus overcome by the united prayers of Peter and Paul at Rome, in the time of Nero, ii. 622. See likewise iii. 76
Simon, son of Gioras, one of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, taken prisoner, and reserved for the triumph, iii. 525; led in triumph, at Rome, with other prisoners, and then put to death, according to Josephus, 527; the account of his death in Josippon, 570; what Tacitus says of him and the other generals, 613
Simon (*R.*) his remarks concerning St. Matthew's gospel, said to be found in India, i. 391; concerning the institutions of Clement of A. 394
Simplicius, his time and works, and his journey with divers philosophers into Persia, and return thence, iv. 427 to 430; wrote a Commentary on the Enchiridion of Epictetus, 47; his account of Epictetus, 44, 46; wrote against the Manichees, ii. 159
Siricius, Bp of Rome, ii. 502
Sisinnius, Novatian Bp at Constantinople, ii. 55, 56
Sisinnius, disciple of Mani, ii. 144, 180
Slaves, their condition among the Romans, ii. 431
Socinian writers, their character, v. 388
Socinus, his judgment on the Revelation, i. 649
Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, was not a Novatian, ii. 57; his fine passages concerning the Novatians, and the treatment given them by the Bps of Rome and Alexandria, *ibid.*; concerning the persecution, which the Novatians endured from the Arians, in the reign of Constantius, 54; his passage concerning the Manichees, 140, 141, 234; his observation concerning the appointment of festivals, 351, 428; his account of the divisions in the church, after the council of Nice, 352; an account of his History, iii. 92; his character, 93; his respect for the scriptures, *ibid.*; quoted, v. 394
Soldiers, (The *Roman*) and the Jewish rulers, a sermon, v. 180
Solomon, the book of Wisdom quoted as his by Methodius, ii. 103; wrote three books in the canon, according to Gregory Nazianzen, 470; Amphilochius, 473; Gregory Nyssen, 475; Ambrose, 493; Jerom, 540, 548; Rufinus, 573; Augustine, 578, 580, and others, iii. 10, 50, 51
Son of God, the meaning of that character, v. 384 note; on what account Jesus is so, 382 to 384, 390, v. 197 to 200, 322, iv. 678 note *; not because he is of the same essence or substance with the Father, v. 200; equivalent with Messiah, 380, 381, 200; Jesus the son of God, a sermon, 197
Son of man, why our Saviour is so called, v. 193 to 195; Jesus the Son of man, a sermon, 192
Sopater, a philosopher in the time of Constantine, his history and works, from Eunapius, iv. 381, 382, 405
Sophronius, his time and writings, ii. 525, 526
Soter, Bp of Rome, i. 291; an excellent custom of that church in his time, 438
Soul, some of opinion that it died with the body, and would be raised with it, i. 524. Transmigration of souls held by the Manichees, ii. 198; who also said, that Christ came to save souls, not bodies, *ibid*; two souls in man, according to them, 195; how they return to heaven, 198
Sozomen, not a Novatian, ii. 57; a fine passage of his concerning a law of Constantine against heretics, 53, 54; an account of his Ecclesiastical History, iii. 93; his character and respect for the scriptures, *ibid.*
Spanheim, (*Fr.*) quoted and commended, iii. 328. iv. 189

Digitized by Google

Spartian, his testimony to the persecution of Severus, iv. 168; a story told by him, of Caracalla, when young, 166
Spirit, several acceptations of that word in scripture, v. 395 to to 401, 472, 473
Spirit, (*The Holy*) said by Eusebius to be made by the Son, ii. 366; according to Victorinus may be styled the Mother of Jesus, ii. 454; this word often signifies a gift, i. 586, 619; ii. 479; sometimes good things in general, v. 216. An explication of those words, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of God, as used in the scriptures, v. 395 to 422. A Letter on the Personality of the Spirit, 472, 473. Remarks on Dr. Ward's assertion that the Holy Ghost in the New Testament denotes both a person, and a power, 493, 494. See *Trinity*.
Gifts of the Spirit, ordinary and extraordinary, iii. 73; how general they were in the times of the apostles, v. 414, 415. Exhortations to those who were favoured with such gifts, 415, 416
Spoils of the temple delivered to Titus, iii. 523; carried in triumph at Rome, 527; how long preserved, *ibid.*; what Josippon says of these, 569, 570; what the Talmudists say of their being carried to Rome by Titus, 559
Sprat, (*Bp*) quoted, v. 333
Spurious, the meaning of that word when applied to books, ii. 372, 375
Spyridion, Bp in Cyprus, ii. 442
Stairs, leading from the temple to the castle at Jerusalem, i. 57, 58
Stephen, (*St.*) his death not legal, but tumultuous, i. 33, 35; the time of it, 54, iii. 252, 254; how long the persecution lasted which began at his death, iii. 255, i. 54
Stephen, Bp of Laodicea, his history, ii. 79
Stichometries, a description of them, iii. 47; the stichometry of Nicephorus, 47, 48; a stichometry from Cotelerius, 49; another from the same, 50
Stilicho, his preferments and death, iv. 411
Stoic principles, a general account of them, iv. 47
Strangers among the Israelites, who they were, v. 488 to 490, 491, 497; the same as proselytes, 491
Strategius, respected and employed by Constantine, ii. 162; and Constantius, iv. 373
Subintroduced women, i. 622, v. 440 to 443
Subscriptions, imposing subscription of speculative articles, condemned, ii. 352 to 355
Suetonius, his time and works, iii. 618; what he says of Chrestus, and of Claudius expelling the Jews from Rome, i. 135, iii. 618; and of Tiberius's treatment of the Jews, i. 63; his testimony to Nero's persecution of the Christians, iii. 618, 619; to the Jewish war, and to the desolation of Judea by Vespasian and Titus, 620. And see 532; to Domitian's persecution, 621; the sum of his testimony, 622
Sufferings, the greatness of Christ in his last sufferings, a sermon, v. 161; Divine testimonies given in his last sufferings, a sermon, 175
Suicide practised by the Jews, that they might not come alive into the hands of the Romans, iii. 489, 509, 528, 563.
Suidas, his time, and a passage from him concerning St. John, ii. 608; passages concerning Augustus's Cæsar's Census, i. 137, 138
Sulpicius Severus, his time, and works, ii. 621; his character, *ibid.*; his account of Nero's persecution of the Christians, iii. 612; his history of Priscillian and his followers, ii. 498 to 501; did not approve, that civil penalties should be inflicted upon erroneous Christians, 511; his testimony to the scriptures, ii. 622; select passages from him, and that he condemned all persecution, 622, to 624
Sun and Moon, the Manichæan notion of them, ii. 188; made of pure celestial substance, 193; vessels of passage for souls from heaven to earth, 198
Susanna, the book so called, i. 517, 556
Sykes, A. A. quoted, iii. 418, v. 392, 426
Syllæus, chief minister to Obodas king of Arabia, the difference between him and Herod, i. 149, 152, 191
Symmachus, author of a Greek version of the Old Testament, his history and character, and works, i. 446 to 448
Symmachus, a heathen, his preferments, works, and character, iv. 465, 466; and see also 455, 456
Symphosius, a Priscillianist bishop, ii. 509
Sympronian, a learned Novatian, ii. 50
Synagogue, the worship there, i. 114; the Jews whipped men in their synagogues, 25
Synesius, Bp of Ptolemais, a great admirer of Hypatia, iv. 427
Synopsis of sacred scripture, ascribed to Athanasius, but not his, i. 472, ii. 403; mentioned again, i. 371; extracts out of it, ii. 403 to 406; *another Synopsis* of Chrysostom, iii. 600 to 602
Syria, the great authority of the president of that province, i. 178, 179
Syrian Christians, their canon of the scriptures of the New Testament, iii. 488, 490; their versions of the New Testament, 489, 490
Syrianus, president in the school of philosophy at Athens, and predecessor of Proclus, iv. 418, 421

T

Tacitus, (*Cornelius*) his time and works, iii. 610; his account of Nero's persecuting the Christians, i. 107, iii. 611; his testimony to the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus, 613, 614
TALMUD, the several acceptations of that word, iii. 547; times of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, 548; extracts from both, concerning the nativity of Jesus, 553; concerning our Lord's journey into Egypt, 553 to 555; concerning his disciples, 555; concerning James in particular, 154; concerning his last sufferings, 556 to 557; concerning the power of miracles in Jesus and his disciples, 558; and see 553, 554; concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Vespasian and Titus, 558 to 560
Tarsus, what privileges it enjoyed, i. 123, 124
Tatian, his time, i. 353; his principles, *ibid.*; his Harmony of the Four Gospels, 354; what Theodoret says of it, *ibid.*; a commentary upon it, by Ephrem, *ibid.*; received the epistle to Titus and other epistles of St. Paul, 355; references to the New Testament in his book against the Gentiles, 354, 355; wrote a book of difficult questions for explaining the scriptures, 445; his Harmony still extant, 506; extracts out of it, 508 to 511
TEMPLE *at Jerusalem*, limits prescribed to foreigners, i. 39, 46; its governors, 21; captain of the temple, 26, 58, 59; when taken by Pompey, iii. 492; when destroyed by Titus, 496, 518, 525; its magnificence and great riches, 492, 493, 518, 519, 525, 614; how rebuilt after the return from the Babylonian captivity, 584, 585; forty-six years in building, i. 130, 131, 205, 206; the times of the duration of the two temples, that built by Solomon, and that built after the return from Babylon, iii. 586
The Temple of Onias in Egypt, demolished by orders from Vespasian, iii. 528
The Temple of Peace, erected at Rome by order of Vespasian, after the conquest of Judea, iii. 527
Terebinth: See *Buddas*
TERTULLIAN, his father's office, i. 476; his time, 417, 418; his character, 416; whether he was once a heathen, 416; the causes of his Montanism, 418; ascribes the survey at our Saviour's birth to Saturninus, i. 178, 187; committed great mistakes in history, 178, 188; his remarks upon Trajan's rescript, iii. 29, 31; his pathetic address to

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Scapula, proconsul of Africa, 77; the time of it, iv. 165, 168; his accounts of the different behaviour of governors of provinces to the Christians, 163; the time of his apology, 169, 301; how he treats the catholics, i. 418; asserts human liberty, iv. 667; his testimonies to the books of the New Testament, i. 419 to 436; speaks of the heresies in the times of the apostles as only two, those of the Docetæ and Ebionites, iv. 512; his accounts of the Heretics, Apelles, 639, &c. Hermogenes, 665 to 668; Leucius, 626, 629; Marcion, 589; several quotations, 602 to 604, &c. and Praxeas, 676 to 680; shews that the principal doctrines of the gospel remain certain in Marcion's gospel, 522; quoted, v. 426. *And see the contents of his chapter*, i. 460. *Additions to Tertullian*, quoted, iv. 662

Tertullus endeavoured to impose upon Felix, i. 39

Testament, the meaning of that word, and Old and New Testament, a common division of sacred canonical books, iii. 140; instead of which Latin authors sometimes use the word *instrument*, *ibid.*

THE OLD TESTAMENT. See *Catalogues*, and *the Canon of the Old Testament*. The canonical books of the Old Testament written in Hebrew, i. 517, 556; how quoted by the apostles and evangelists, ii. 551, 552, 564, 568, 569; how canonical and apocryphal books of the Old Testament are quoted in the *Imperfect Work*, iii. 65. Order of the books of the Old and New Testament in the Alexandrian MSS. 45; in the Stichometry of Nicephorus, 47, 48; and other stichometries, 49, 50. The Old Testament rejected by the Marcionites, iv. 608 to 611

THE NEW TESTAMENT consisted of two codes or collections, called gospels and epistles; or gospels, and apostles, in the time of Ignatius, i. 322; in the time of Tertullian, 431 to 433; the Acts being in the latter division, 432, 433; so likewise in the time of Cyprian, ii. 28, 29. All the books of the New Testament written in Greek except St. Matthew's gospel, ii. 551, 569; their integrity asserted by Tertullian, i. 430; and their inspiration by the same, 431

The Order of the books of the New Testament, ii. 488, iii. 453 to 458; that they were early known, 459 to 465; that none of them have been lost, 465 to 470; their order in Tertullian, i. 433; in Origen, 532; in Eusebius, ii. 369, 370; in Athanasius, ii. 400; in the Synopsis ascribed to him, 403, 404; in Cyril, 409; in the council of Laodicea, 414, 415; in Epiphanius, 417; in Gregory Nazianzen, 470; in Amphilochius, 473; in Ebedjesu, 488; in James of Edessa, *ibid.*; in Philaster, 522, 523; in Jerom, 548, 549, 567; in Rufinus, 573; in the council of Carthage, 574, 575; in Augustine, 578, 579, 588, 589; in Chrysostom, 601, 602; in divers authors, 620, 628, iii. 29, 39, 41, 42, 46, 47, 49, 58, 59, 60, 61, 74, 75, 77, 80, 91; see *Canon*

The part of the New Testament received by Marcion, iv. 611, 612; his alterations in the New Testament, 609, 611 to 616

In-the-testament, an expression equivalent to canonical, i. 393. iii. 52, 79, 80, 91

Testaments of the twelve patriarchs, their time, and the character of the author, i. 456, 457, iii. 484; their testimony to the books of the New Testament, i. 459 to 465; how quoted by Origen, 459.

Tetrapla of Origen, some account of, i. 447

Thallus, a Syrian author, his time, and whether he has mentioned the darkness at the time of our Saviour's passion, i. 515. iii. 66, 67; not quoted by Grotius, or Dr. Clarke, 67

Thamus, an Egyptian pilot, a story concerning him in Plutarch, iii. 606, 607

Themison, a Montanist, i. 480

Themistius, philosopher and senator, his time, writings, and character, iv. 350, 351; his account of M. Antoninus's victory in Germany, 103; extracts out of his oration to Jovian, commending that emperor for his moderation in things of religion, 351, 352; out of his oration to Valens, to the like purpose, 358; how he quotes scripture, 351

Theoctetus or *Theoctistus*, Bp of Cæsarea, an admirer of Origen, i. 493, 494; ordains him, 522

Theodore, Bp of Heraclea in Thrace, ii. 320

Theodore, Bp of Mopsuestia, his time, ii. 526; his works, particularly his commentaries upon the scriptures, 527 to 528; a fragment concerning the four gospels, with remarks, 529; was a great preacher, 530; reflections upon him after his death, 530 to 531; two select passages from him, *ibid.*

Theodoret, his account of Tatian's Harmony, i. 354; his works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 9 to 12; texts explained by him, 13; select passages from him, 13 to 15; an account of his *Ecclesiastical History*, 93; reduced heresies of the two first centuries to two kinds, iv. 511; his account of the Heretics, Adamians, 576; censured, 577; of Artemon, 658; of the Carpocratians, 557, 559, 561; Cerdon, 587; Cerinthus, 567; Elcesaites, 685, 686, 689; Hermogenes, 664; Marcosians, 579; Marcionites, 611; Ophians, 655; Prodicus, 573; censured, *ibid.*; quoted, v. 427

Theodorus, about whom heathen people had a consultation in the time of Valens, iv. 449

Theodosius, an Arian Bp at Philadelphia, said by some to have been the chief conductor of the council of Laodicea, ii. 415

Theodosius the first, a law of his against Arians and others, ii. 473, 474; how reflected upon by Zosimus, iv. 406

Theodotion, his Greek version of the Old Testament quoted by Irenæus, i. 364

Theodotus, reckoned a Montanist, i. 491

Theodotus the Banker, i. 486, iv. 662: supposed to be the author of the sect of the Melchisedechians, *ibid.*; who are said to have thought Melchisedec to be a greater power than Christ, 663

Theodotus, of Byzantium, the Tanner, i. 486, 487; his time and opinions, iv. 659; accused of denying Christ in a time of persecution, 650 to 651; received the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, 661; there were several of the same name in the second century, 662

Theodotus, a Valentinian, iv. 662

Theodotus, Bp of Laodicea, to whom Eusebius inscribed his *Evangelical preparation*; his eminence, and principles, ii. 80

Theognostus of Alexandria, his history, character and work, ii. 80 to 82; his testimony to the scriptures, 86; received the epistle to the Hebrews, 87

Theonas, Bp of Alexandria, his history, and testimony to the scriptures, ii. 83, 84

Theopemptus, Novatian Bp at Alexandria, ill-treated by Cyril, ii. 57

Theophilus, to whom St. Luke wrote, who he was, iii. 87, 203

Theophilus, Bp of Alexandria, his character, and conduct towards some of the most intelligent monks in Egypt, ii. 536 to 538; his character in Zosimus, iv. 410; from others, 473

Theophilus, Bp of Antioch, his time and works, particularly his remaining books to Autolycus, i. 383, 384; the Commentary upon the gospels doubtful, *ibid.*; his testimony to the books of the New Testament, 388, 389

Theophilus, Bp of Cæsarea, wrote in the controversy about the time of keeping Easter, i. 446

Theophylact, his opinion concerning the occasion of writing St. Mark's gospel, i. 395; and the time of writing St. Matthew's gospel, ii. 388; quoted, 407; his time, works, and testimony to the scriptures, iii. 85 to 89

Theotecnus, Bp of Cæsarea, ordained Anatolius, who was afterwards Bp of Laodicea, ii. 77; mentioned again, 118

Theotecnus, an impostor at Antioch, and curator in that city,

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and a bitter enemy to the Christians, in the time of Dioclesian's persecution, iv. 286
Thessalonians, (*The two epistles to the*) when and where written, iii. 285, 286
Theudas, his design overthrown, i. 161; a difficulty relating to him considered, 221 to 225
Thomas, see *Gospel*.
Thomas, (The Apostle) a sermon, v. 187
The Thundering Legion, see *Antoninus* (*M.*)
Tiberian, his Letter to Trajan not genuine, iv. 30
Tiberian, a Priscillianist writer, ii. 497
Tiberius, two computations of his reign, i. 194 to 197; objections against that supposition considered, 198 to 201; the date of the first computation, 200, 201; a dilatory prince, 203, 205; what knowledge he had of Jesus Christ, iii. 599 to 606
Tiberius Alexander, his moderation toward the Jews at Alexandria, i. 102
Tichonius, a Donatist writer, ii. 300
Tillemont, (*L.*) censured, ii. 354; his character of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, 359; his opinion of the Constitutions, 423; his character of Apollinarius, 463; quoted, 507, note, and oftentimes elsewhere. His observations, upon the testimony of Josephus to the destruction of Jerusalem, iii. 530; upon his paragraph relating to our Saviour, 540; his remark upon the rescript of Trajan, iv. 30; his observations upon Phlegon, 66; and upon Marcus Antoninus's treatment of the Christians, 79, 93
Tillotson, (*Abp.*) His observations upon the testimony of Josephus to the destruction of Jerusalem, iii. 530
Timothy, apostle in a lower sense, iii. 37; an objection against St. Paul's second epistle to him, i. 558; he was left at Ephesus by Paul in his way to Jerusalem, iii. 304; was with Paul at Rome, 307, 308; the first epistle to him, when and where written, 292 to 294; the second epistle when and where written, 303 to 321
Title, written upon our Saviour's cross, i. 87
Titus, (*The epistle to*) when and where written, iii. 294 to 296; that he was converted from idolatry to Christianity, 401
Titus, his remarkable speech to the chief leaders of the people at Jerusalem, iii. 502; his good character from Josephus and heathen writers, 512; unwilling that the temple should be destroyed, 518; proclaimed emperor by the Roman soldiers after taking the temple, 522; his treatment of John and Simon, 523, 525; his journey from Judea to Rome, 526; his arch at Rome, 527, 533, 573; did not refuse to be crowned for the conquest of Judea, 538; an inscription to his honour, *ibid.*; aspersed by the Jewish rabbins and Talmudical writers, 559, 573; commended by Josippon, 573
Titus, Bp of Bostra in Arabia, author of a treatise against the Manichees, and other works, ii. 146; modern censures of his principles, 147; his testimony to the scriptures, *ibid.*; he exaggerates in some things said by him of the Manichees, 218; how Titus was used by the emperor Julian, 147
Tobit, how quoted by Origen, i. 556; by Commodian, ii. 73; not received as a canonical book by Jerom, 540, 541, 542; nor by Rufinus, 573; nor Chrysostom, 601
Toldoth Jeschu quoted, iii. 553; quoted again, and the character of that work, 574, note [c]
Toledo, a council there in the cause of the Priscillianists, ii. 500, 509
Tollius, (*J.*) quoted, iii. 338
Tongue, the difficulty of governing, a sermon, v. 147
Tostatus, (*Alphonsus*) quoted, v. 499
Traitors of the scriptures and sacred vessels, in Dioclesian's persecution, ii. 293, 294
Trajan, his Rescript to Pliny concerning the Christians, iv. 15; rehearsed, with notes and observations, 29, 30; Eusebius's account of the persecution in his reign, 15; whether Trajan did, by an edict, put an end to the persecution, 30; his character, 37, 38; was worshipped as a god in his lifetime, 21; his edict against the Christians was in force, as long as heathenism subsisted in the empire, 34, 52, 199, 300, 301
Transmigration of souls held by the Manichees, ii. 197, 198; and Marcionites, iv. 628, 629
Transubstantiation not countenanced in the *Imperfect Work*, iii. 67
Travels of the apostles, an account of that apocryphal book, ii. 230
Tribes, the twelve, in being in the times of the apostles, i. 61
Tribonian, his eminence; but his Christianity doubtful, iv. 497
TRINITY, the Manichees believed a consubstantial Trinity, ii. 188; see also 177; on account of that doctrine heathens supposed that Christians held a plurality of gods, 399; not made known to the Jews, ii. 13
Two Schemes of *a Trinity* considered, and the Divine Unity asserted, in Four Discourses on Phil. ii. 5 to 11, vol. v. 309 to 331; the Scheme commonly received, 311, 312; the distinction of persons, 310, 311; difficult to apply the commonly received opinion concerning Christ to this text, 312; the Arian Scheme, 312 to 315; objections to it, 315 to 316; the *Nazaræan*, or Unitarian doctrine of one God the Father according to the New Testament, 318 to 324; our blessed Saviour was a man with a reasonable soul and human body, born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Ghost, and especially favoured of God, 320 to 323; the Holy Spirit, God himself, or his power, gift, influence, or manifestation, 323, 324; the Text explained, 326 to 329; application of the subject, 329 to 331
Trophimus, when left by Paul at Miletus, iii. 307
Tryphon, a Christian writer, and a scholar of Origen, i. 581
Turbo, disciple of Mani, his history, ii. 144
Turibius, Bp of Astorga, in Spain, ii. 512
Turkestan, where situated, ii. 166, 167
Turner, (*R.*) his account of the Sibylline oracles, i. 450; quoted and commended, i. 612, note [c]; his judgment concerning the Constitutions, ii. 422; his work against them, 427; quoted again, 375, note [b]; and 427, 432; iv. 512, 515, 518
Twells, (Dr.) a remark of his examined, i. 483, 484; quoted, 484, 642, 645, 647, and elsewhere.
Tyrannio, Bp of Tyre, and martyr in Dioclesian's persecution, i. 100

V

Valens, deacon at Ælia, his excellent character and martyrdom, ii. 119
Valentinian, emperor, his moderation in things of religion commended by Ammianus, iv. 378, 441
Valentinians, used St. Luke's gospel, i. 367; received all the books of the New Testament, iii. 132, 461. 462; argued from the several parts of the Old and New Testament, ii. 373; said to have composed a new gospel, 376, 377; and to have corrupted the scriptures, 430, 563; Hippolytus and others wrote against them, 496; as did Proculus, 580
Valerian, emperor, his time and character, iv. 194; kind to the Christians in the beginning of his reign, 195; his persecution of the Christians, i. 610; general accounts of it from several writers and how long it lasted, iv. 194; an account of his persecution from Dionysius, Bp of Alexandria, 194 to 196; from Cyprian, Bp of Carthage, who also suffered martyrdom in that persecution, 197 to 199; his son Gallienus by edict gave peace to the churches, 196
Valesians, an obscure sect, i. 587
Vandale, (*A.*) his judgment upon a work ascribed to Porphyry, iv. 241
Variety of opinions, no just objection against the truth of

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Christianity, but in the event serviceable to the interest of truth, as has been observed by Origen, Augustine, and Clement of Alexandria, ii. 236, 237; iv. 527 to 529
Varus, (*Quintilius*) when he came president into Syria, i. 187
Vegetius, his account of the military oath in his time, iv. 380
Venema, (*H.*) iii. 342
Vercelli, an ancient Latin version of the gospels there, ii. 448
Verres, prætor of Sicily, steals images of the gods, i. 95; his government unrighteous and infamous, 103
Versions of the Scripture, (Greek) of the Old Testament, i. 446; ii. 474; a Latin version of the New Testament in Tertullian's time, i. 434; the ancient Latin version, and that made by Jerom, ii. 594; iii. 18, 60, 72; the scripture said by Augustine to have been translated into many languages, 594; and by Chrysostom, 611; and Theodoret, 14; *See Latin translation of the Old Testament.*
Vespasian, appointed general in the Jewish war by Nero, iii. 508; proclaimed emperor in Judea and at Alexandria, 511, 512; miracles ascribed to him, but not really such, 512, 513; his treatment of Sabinus and Epponina, with remarks, 513; his good character, 512, and see 508, note [b]
Vestal virgins, their number, office, and privileges, iv. 463
Vettius Epagathus, a martyr at Lyons, iv. 83
Victor of Antioch, his Commentary upon St. Mark's gospel, ii. 625, 626
Victor of Capua, his time and character, i. 327; what he writes of Tatian's harmony, 354
Victor, Bp of Rome, i. 445
Victor Tununensis, his story, that the gospels were corrected in the time of Anastasius, considered, iii. 67, 68
Victorinus, (*C. M.*) his history, particularly his conversion from heathenism to Christianity, the character of his writings, and his testimony to the scriptures, ii. 453, 454
Vincentius Lirinensis, his character of Tertullian and Origen, i. 417; his works and time, and testimony to the scriptures, with remarks, iii. 23 to 29; *and see the contents of his chapter*, 23
Virtue recommended under the similitude of white raiment, a sermon, v. 242
Vitellius, president of Syria, displaceth Pilate and Caiaphas, i. 49, 79, 202; his expedition to the Euphrates, 53, 203; at the request of the Jews forbids his forces to pass through Judea, 53, 98, 202; puts the keeping of the high priest's vestment into the hands of the Jews, and does divers other things at Jerusalem, 202, 203; see likewise 50, 53, 100
Vitellius, a Donatist writer, with a remark to the advantage of their authors, ii. 300
Vitringa (*C.*) quoted, iii. 444, 451, 452; iv. 532; his judgment concerning the passage in Josephus relating to Jesus Christ, iii. 542
Vives, Ludovicus, his character of Jerom, ii. 539
Ulphilas, Bp of the Goths, his eminence and usefulness to that people, ii. 321
Ulpian, (*D.*) his time, iv. 179; his character, *ibid.*; his description of the power of the presidents, and the power of the sword, i. 42; in his book of the Duty of a Proconsul he made a collection of Imperial edicts against the Christians, ii. 68, iv. 179; fragments of his work, in the Pandects, 180
Unitarians, Archelaus said to speak like one, ii. 138; Unitarian Christians called Jews, i. 626; their sentiments defended from scripture by Praxeas, iv. 680. The Unitarian doctrine of one God the Father, according to the New Testament, v. 318 to 324
Unity of God asserted, v. 394, 423 to 425; how held by the Jews, 423, 425; acknowledged by all the ancient Heretics, iv. 519; but they are charged with believing that the world was not made by him, *ibid.*
Volusian's correspondence with Augustine A.D. 412; vol. iv. 483 to 489
Vopiscus, (*Fl.*) one of the Augustan writers, his character, and his account of a Letter of Aurelian to the senate, in which the Christians are mentioned, iv. 207, 251
Vossius, (*J.*) his opinion concerning Hagiographal books, ii. 543
Vow of the Nazarite, i. 114 to 116
Upton's, (*J.*) edition of Epictetus, quoted, iv. 49, notes
Urbanus, Roman president in Palestine, his cruel treatment of the Christians in Dioclesian's persecution, ii. 118
Usher's, (*Jam.*) judgment upon the book called the Doctrine of the Apostles, ii. 386, 387; his character of the Compiler of the Constitutions, 437; an observation of his upon them, 441

W

Wagenseil, (*J. C.*) his accounts of the time of the Mishna, and of Jehudah, the composer of it, iii. 547, 548, 552; his remarks upon a passage in the Talmud, 555, 556; upon the Toldoth Jeschu, 574 note [c]
Wake, (*Abp.*) his opinion of the *Responsiones* ascribed to Polycarp, i. 327; his translation of a passage in Ignatius's epistles corrected, 320 note [a]
Wall, (*Dr. W.*) his opinion of Clement of Rome, i. 550; his interpretation of Phil. ii. 6. 572; quoted, iii. 307, 382, 387, 416; v. 387, 406, 410, and elsewhere; his observations upon John viii. at the beginning, iv. 140
War condemned by Archelaus, ii. 138; and some think by the Manichees, 197
War with the Romans, (*Jewish*) its time and duration, iii. 496; events preceding it, and the siege of Jerusalem, 496 to 501; the occasion of it, according to Josephus, 501 to 505; the history of it and the siege of Jerusalem from Josephus, 505 to 528; from other histories of it, besides that of Josephus, 531 to 533
Warburton, (*Dr.*) *Bp of Gloucester*, quoted, ii. 247; iii. 542; iv. 108, 110, 326, 327, 331
Ward, (*Dr. John*) commended, i. 153 note [a]; his observation concerning the Egyptian impostor, 227; a critical observation of his, ii. 327 note [a]; his advice to the author concerning Libanius's oration for the temples, iv. 359 note [a]; his remarks upon that oration, 360 note [r], 365 note [s]; REMARKS upon DR. WARD'S DISSERTATIONS upon several passages of the sacred scriptures, v. 475 to 521
Waterland, (*Dr.*) his opinion of the Constitutions, ii. 424
Wesselingius, (*P.*) quoted, iii. 68
West, (*Gilbert, Esq.*) iii. 145 note [a]
Weston's Inquiry into the rejection of the Christian miracles, by the heathens, referred to, i. 250
Wetstein (*J. J.*) quoted, i. 505, 508, 512, 563; ii. 17, 18, 123, 577; iii. 30, 33, 34, 62, 162, 165, 181, 191, 199, 239, 246, 328, 338, 343, 347, 421, 451; an inaccurate quotation of Isidore of Pelusium, in his Greek Testament, iii. 173
A DISSERTATION upon the two EPISTLES ascribed to CLEMENT of ROME, lately published by Mr. Wetstein, v. 432 to 446
Wetstein, (*J. Rodolph*), quoted, i. 514
Wharton, (*H*) his opinion concerning the author of the Testaments of the twelve patriarchs, i. 457; quoted again, 465
Whiston, (*W.*) his supposition that the Jews were enrolled at the request of Augustus, i. 145, 146; his solution of a difficulty concerning the assessment of Cyrenius, 163 to 165; his opinion, concerning the time of Pilate's removal, 204; concerning the time of Herod's death, considered, 231; he defends the larger epistles of Ignatius, 314; his opinion of the Sibylline oracles, 455; of the Testaments of the twelve patriarchs, 456, 457, 458; of the author of the Recognitions, 467; of the work itself, 468; a mistake of his, *ibid.*; his opinion of the Constitutions, ii. 425; his

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canon of the New Testament, 143; computes St. John to have written his gospel, before the destruction of Jerusalem, about the year 63, iii. 236, 239; quoted 491, 515, 541, 546; v. 372, 468
Whitby, (*Dr.*) his interpretation of Luke ii. 1, 2. i. 142, 165; quoted, iii. 343, 351; his observations upon the testimony of Josephus and the Talmuds to the destruction of Jerusalem, 530; quoted, v. 384 note; 391, 401, 410, 412, 417, 431
Willes, (*Dr.*) his remarks upon the prodigies preceding the destruction of Jerusalem as related by Josephus, iii. 520
Wisdom, quoted as Solomon's by Methodius, ii. 103; not reckoned a canonical book by Jerom, 540, 541; nor by Rufinus, 573; nor by Chrysostom, 601; see likewise 69, 80
Wisdom attainable by those who seek it, a sermon, v. 89
Witsius, (*H.*) commended, iii. 307, 308, 316, v. 410; his observations upon Ulpian and the Pandects, iv. 179, 181
Wolfius, (*J. C.*) quoted and commended, i. 550, 645, 647; ii. 18, 158, 227, 239, 466, 478, 492, 544; v. 416
Woman, (*the*) who anointed Jesus with precious ointment, a sermon, v. 229
Woolston; A VINDICATION of THREE of our blessed SAVIOUR'S MIRACLES, *viz.* The raising of Jairus's daughter, the widow of Nain's son, and Lazarus; in answer to the objections of *Woolston*, v. 333 to 370; objection the first, p. 336; second, p. 345; third, p. 346; fourth, p. 349; fifth, p. 351; sixth, p. 352; particular objections to the story of Lazarus, 355 to 358; his Jewish rabbi's letter answered, p. 358 to 362; observations on the relation of the three miracles, p. 363 to 370; Letter to Lord Barrington concerning the raising of Jairus's daughter, i. p. xxxvii.
WORD, or LOGOS, its several acceptations, i. 584, 618; how used by St. John at the beginning of his gospel, iii. 239 to 241; iv. 678. A LETTER concerning the question, whether the Locos supplied the place of a human soul in the person of JESUS CHRIST, v. 371 to 431
Good works recommended, ii. 599, 622; iii. 21, 83
Worship, that of the Manichees: its simplicity, ii. 205; they read and explained the scriptures in their assemblies, 206; they had baptism, and the eucharist, *ibid.*; observed the Lord's-day, Easter, and the anniversary of Mani's death, 207; their discipline, *ibid.*; they met together for divine worship, though prohibited by the laws, 161
Wotton, (*Dr.*) his observations upon the testimony of Josephus to the destruction of Jerusalem, iii. 530; upon the two Talmuds, 548 note [b]
Writings of three sorts, genuine, mixed, and spurious, i. 554, 555, 562. And see ii. 372 to 375

X

Xiphilinus, (*J.*) his account of Marcus Antoninus's deliverance in Germany, iv. 101; his Epitome of Dion Cassius, 182
Xistus, *Bp of Rome*, a martyr in the time of Valerian, iv. 198

Z

Zacagni, (*L. A.*) quoted, iii. 39; and elsewhere
Zacharias, son of Baruch, put to death at Jerusalem, i. 45, 46, 217, 218; a difficulty concerning Zacharias son of Barachias considered, 217 to 221
Zaccheus called a dwarf, i. 511
Zeal, private zeal, or zealotism, its nature and rules, i. 34, 35, 116 to 118
Zealots, how they killed Zacharias son of Baruch, i. 217, 218
Zenas, said to be a Jewish lawyer, and a Christian, ii. 522; by Jerom he is called *a doctor of the law, and an apostolical man.* Zenam vero, legis doctorem, de alio scripturæ loco quis fuerit, non possumus dicere, nisi hoc tantum, quod et ipse apostolicus vir, id operis, quod Apollo exercebat, habuerit, Christi ecclesias extruendi. *In Tit. T. 4. p.* 439
Zenobia, queen of the Palmyrenes, favoured Paul of Samosata, i. 623; her character, 623, 624; some remarkable events of her history, iv. 203
Zosimus, his time and work, iv. 397, 398; extracts from it, 398 to 416; general remarks upon those extracts, 415; Dr. Bentley's remarks upon his work, *ibid.*; his false account of Constantine's conversion, *ii.* 333, iv. 399, 400

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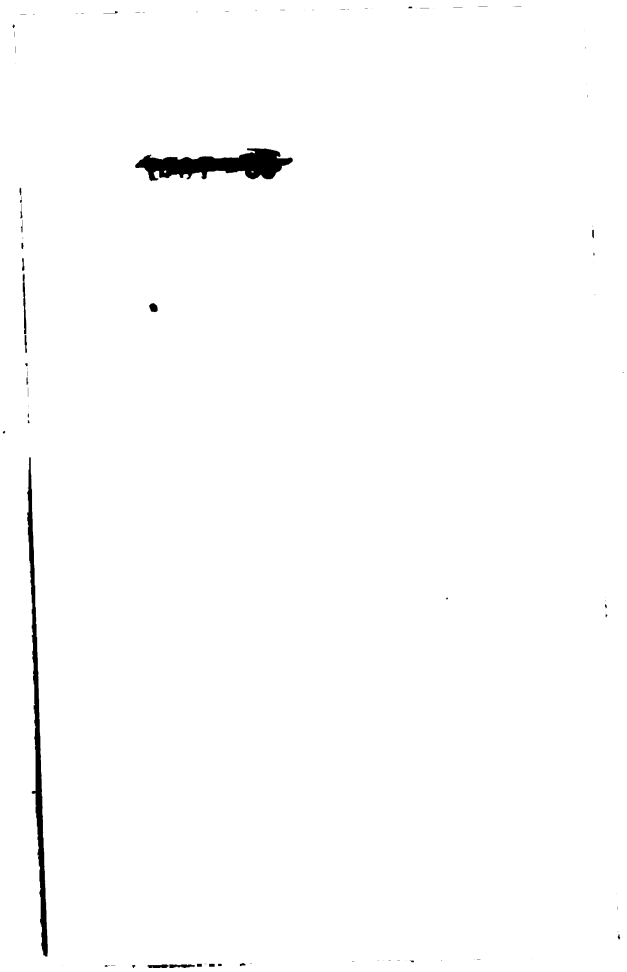

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